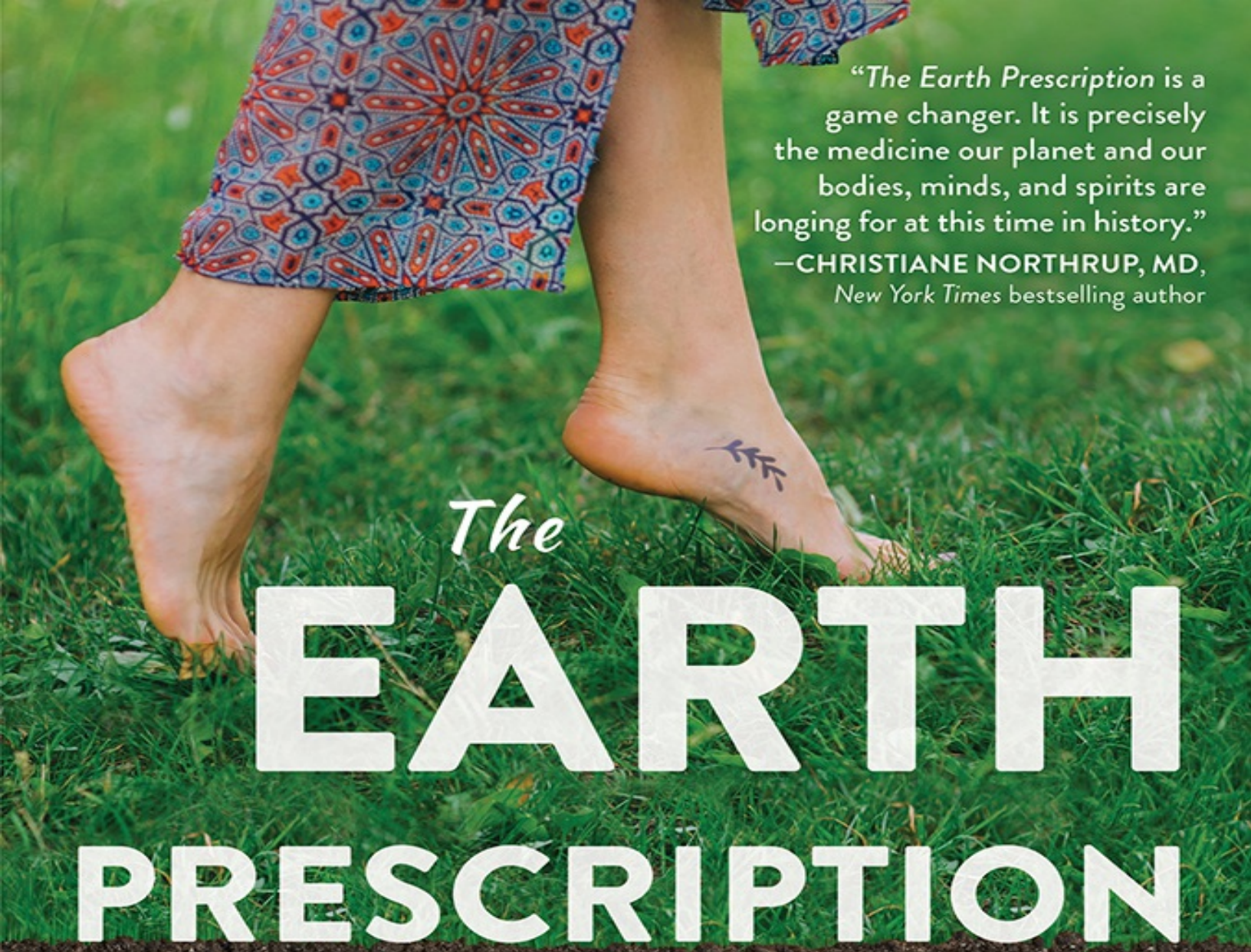


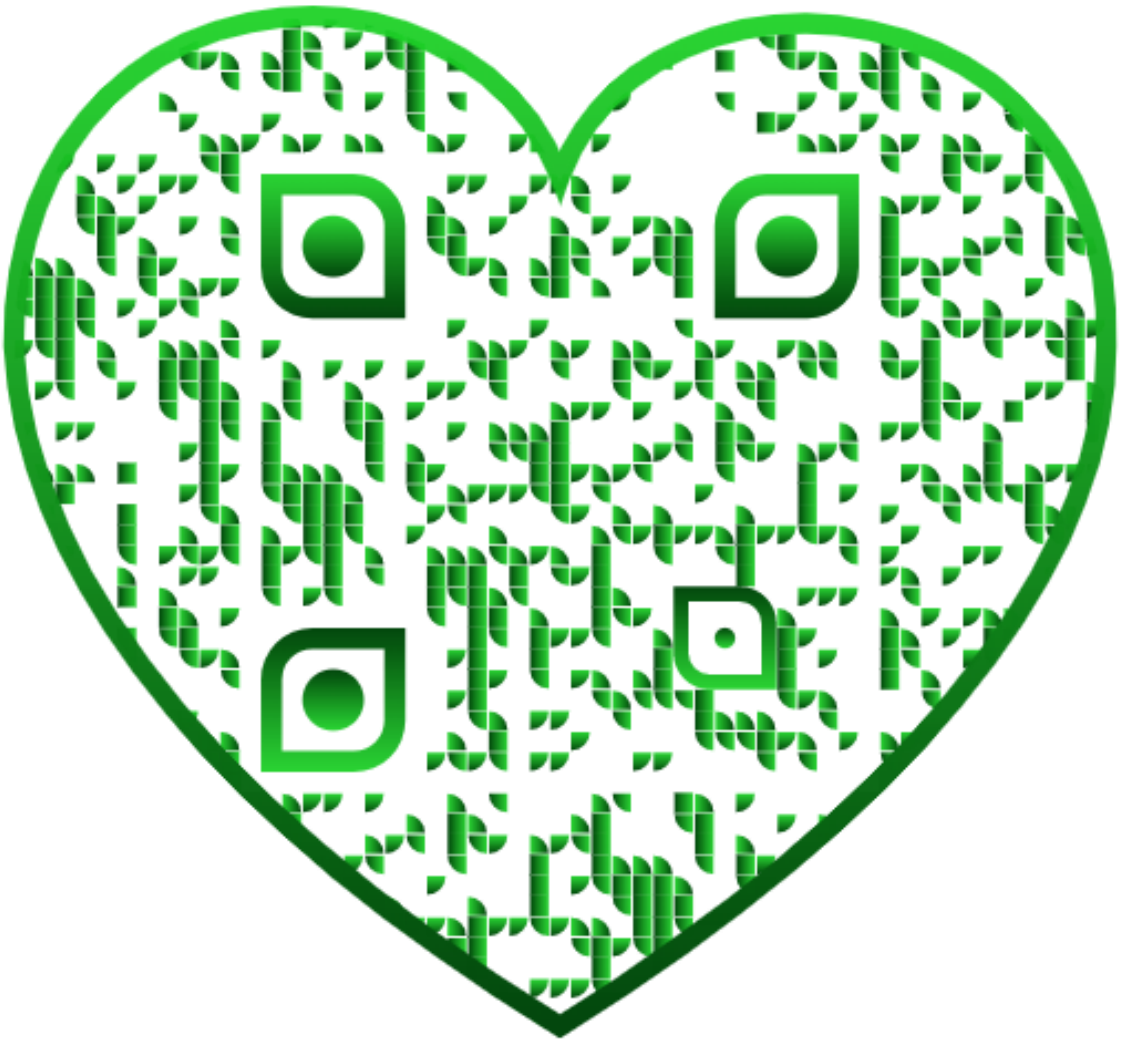
"*The Earth Prescription* is a game changer. It is precisely the medicine our planet and our bodies, minds, and spirits are longing for at this time in history."
—CHRISTIANE NORTHRUP, MD,
New York Times bestselling author

The EARTH PRESCRIPTION

Discover the Healing Power of Nature with *Grounding Practices* for Every Season

LAURA KONIVER, MD

Foreword by ECHAN DERAVY | Afterword by STEPHEN KROSCHEL



The

EARTH PRESCRIPTION

Discover the Healing Power of Nature with *Grounding Practices* for Every Season

LAURA KONIVER, MD

REVEAL PRESS
AN IMPRINT OF NEW HARBINGER PUBLICATIONS

CONTENTS

Foreword: by Echan Deravy

Introduction: Welcome to the Healing Power of the Earth

Part One: Why Is Grounding So Healing?

Chapter 1: We Are Conductive Beings: Earth Energy Always Moves Through Us

Chapter 2: The Whole-Being Support We Receive from Deep Connectivity

Chapter 3: A Sense of Spiritual Connection to All

Part Two: Grounding Practices You Can Do, All Year Long

Chapter 4: Summer Fun in the Sun— with Ways to Keep Cool

Chapter 5: Autumn Displays and Gathering Your Bountiful Harvest

Chapter 6: Staying Grounded and Warm in Winter's Depths

Chapter 7: Spring Blooms with Your Fresh Vibrancy

Part Three: Ways to Further Explore and Integrate

Chapter 8: Answers to Your Biggest Questions About Grounding

Chapter 9: A Vision of a Fully Grounded Humanity

Afterword: by Stephen Kroschel

Acknowledgments

Resources

FOREWORD:

by Echan Deravy

As the earthing ambassador to Japan, I have had six years of experience on the front lines of sharing this grounded message, one I learned principally from Dr. Laura Koniver.

I flew to meet Dr. Koniver in the United States, and she was kind enough to guide me on a barefoot walk through a particularly beautiful part of South Carolina, all the while answering my endless questions. Later I would interpret her talks and videos on screen to groups of participants in my Tokyo lectures. These were ordinary, hard-working people who spent most of their lives ungrounded. The overwhelmingly positive results of the changes they felt after being grounded were unequivocal. This works! Tens of thousands of Japanese are now fully aware of who Dr. Koniver is and how dedicated she is to sharing the natural benefits of connecting to earth. She never claims anything she cannot explain and back up with both objective scientific evidence along with her own experiences.

Let me make my support of this book crystal clear. Had I not learned what I did from her about the enormous benefits of grounding, I might never have had the confidence to set out on my crazy journey, one that would end up categorically proving to me that everything she had explained was true. This book will change your life, if you read it with an open mind and then practice its sage advice. It might save you years of suffering and countless precious funds. Beyond that, it may contribute to that most elusive of all human strivings: your existential happiness.

In these pages, Dr. Koniver shares with you her decades of practical application of grounding techniques and the marvelous variety of ways in which you and your loved ones can experience the natural benefits of

grounding. As you will read, there is also a spiritual component to being in rhythm with your planet. We human beings are born and die on earth like all other species of life, but unlike all other species we have become disconnected from the pulsing field of energy the earth produces, and that is a big problem. Dr. Koniver has the solution. Now you can learn it for yourself, and then do your body the enormous service of putting it into practice.

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the Healing Power of the Earth

No matter what I did, she just kept crying and crying. Nothing in the world mattered as much to me as my newborn baby, cradled in my arms, yet I couldn't fix what was hurting her. I could see she was in pain; I felt it; I knew it. And the physician in me tried relentlessly to fix what was wrong and help her.

The only time she was not crying in torment was when I was nursing her, so we nursed around the clock. Yet I knew nursing was not fixing what was causing her pain. I took her to her pediatrician, who told me she had colic—that "babies cry, that's just what they do"—and gave me a prescription for an antacid.

I feel that babies cry to communicate, not just to cry, and my baby was communicating to me that she was in severe discomfort all the time. In desperation I would hold her to my chest, skin-to-skin, and walk outside under the moon and stars, praying and singing to her and crying right along with her. I always walked on the earth barefoot, because it was so wonderfully warm where we lived, and it gave me strength. Over time, I realized that walking barefoot with my daughter in my arms did more than give me internal fortitude—it also gave her relief. I noticed that whenever we were outside together, night or day, if I was barefoot and she was touching my skin in some way, her little face would finally relax; her gorgeous, tear-stained eyes, so fresh and young and innocent, would finally clear; and the pain drained out of her body. She would breathe deeply and calmly. And so would I.

I've since discovered the science behind why her pain would instantly abate when we were outside (it has to do with the earth boosting her vagal tone, decreasing pain immediately and, over time, reducing the

inflammation in her body). But back then, I didn't know that I was discovering the healing power of grounding. All I knew was I was incredibly grateful that my child felt better.

Going inside, the moment my feet broke contact with the earth and stepped into an insulated house, her pain would immediately return. She could be in a complete sleep, and when that grounding connection was broken, the pain would immediately find her and wake her up. At first I thought it was being outside that was so comforting; maybe the sound of birds, the wind in the trees, the fresh air? But over time I noticed that whenever we went for a drive, or when she was in a stroller, fresh air and nature's noises surrounded us, but she would still cry.

I finally realized, without knowing why, that it was (my) being barefoot on the earth that was helping her. Once I made that connection, I found decades of research on the healing modality of grounding, as well as the fact that civilizations and cultures since the dawn of humankind have used contact with the earth as a healing tool. So I made sure that I took my baby out for a grounding walk at least three times a day, knowing she would fall asleep and rest peacefully during those times. It was a matter of survival for both of us.

This flowed naturally throughout my children's childhoods. Every day, both kids spent time barefoot outside, running through the grass, creating mud patches in the ground, stomping through rain puddles. Many of the activities I developed for my own children are the basis of the fun activities in this book you are holding.

The Earth Connects and Heals Us

I now fully realize that it is abnormal for the human body to be ungrounded. We need to regain our natural connection with the earth to truly live in a state of optimal well-being. So many of us think that as long as we are outside, we are connected to the earth—but this just isn't so in an era of vinyl and plastic. Even if we adventure outside or play a sport, or our child has recess at school, or we go camping or RVing in the great outdoors, this doesn't mean we are grounded. Shoes, sports cleats, hiking boots, tires on your bike or car, the plastic tarp, sleeping bag, the tent, the synthetic fibers

in your clothing, in your socks, in your picnic blanket and more—these all keep us disconnected.

Have you noticed how activities that require you to touch the earth with your skin are more restorative than activities that don't? Swimming in the ocean, walking barefoot on the beach, running hands through the soil while planting: these are the times you allow your potential and the earth's potential to connect and heal you.

Medical science backs this up. Researchers, including myself, have exhaustively looked at the human body while it is grounded, and the body goes into deeply healing states that I will describe in the coming chapters. I believe we are at a crossroads of going beyond understanding that grounding is a smart healing practice, to knowing that it's essential to remaining healthy in the modern world.

An Empowered Form of Healing

Here's the beauty of grounding: even if just one tiny cell in your body is grounded, then your whole body is grounded. The benefits of grounding are immediate. Nature makes us incredibly resilient, so when we reconnect to the earth we begin to heal straightaway. We can therefore take back power over our own health, and we can do so in fun, enjoyable, playful ways.

Through grounding, healing doesn't have to be scary and fear based; instead, you can simply feel better and better and better. That's what true healing is about. To that end, I wrote this book so you can rediscover your natural connection to the earth and to directly experience all it can do for your health.

Will you feel your pain immediately decrease, as my daughter did? Will you feel your tension and frustration ease, as I did? Will you notice long-term benefits, like sleeping more deeply, less joint pain, uplifted mood, or boosted energy levels? Every person is different, so the best way to find out if this works for you is through your own personal experience. Because no matter what the medical literature shows or what any health care professional says, what matters most is what's true for you. How you feel. And what you notice, after spending time touching the earth.

What Is This Healing Force?

Because of my experience in medicine and working with the human body, it has become completely clear to me that there is a force of energy that pours through our bodies, breathing life into us. I personally tend to call this energy force the *soul*, but there are lots of words for it: chi, prana, life force, qi, soul energy, vital energy, conductive energy, and so many more. All names are simply attempts to convey an understanding about something that is beyond the physical.

To me, this energy flow is the most essential element in health and healing. Thinking of our body simply in terms of a physical body is not helpful, because you can take a completely intact and healthy body, with all its organic carbon-based compounds in peak working order, and if there is not life flowing through it, it begins to decompose. You can do surgery on it, hook it up to breathing and feeding tubes, hydrate it with an IV, shock its heart with electricity, but if the soul has left, the body starts to decay. No pill, surgery, cream, lotion, or potion has ever fully brought health to you. You are the one who has always healed yourself, your whole life—every time—without exception.

Although physicians, surgeons, chiropractors, nutritionists, physical therapists, massage therapists, pharmacists, clergymen, energy healers, acupuncturists, naturopaths, and others may be there to help through different healing modalities, it is always you and your alignment with a healing modality that has done the work of healing. Your soul is conducting the healing energy flow.

Most patients I see in clinical practice—and most patients that doctors see, in general—hold the errant belief that it is the antibiotic or the surgery that is curing them. But every drug, every vitamin, every prescription, and every intervention is just one factor in the mix that tips the scales toward helping you heal. It might help, but without your body's ability to heal itself, no amount of medicine, surgery, or vitamins can make you better. I could go into great detail about how this works, but for now I'll just say this: if your body is not healing itself, nothing can. This is so important. It makes you the boss over your health. It gives *you* the power.

A crucial part of this process, one which you will hear through my language as I tell you about grounding, is that I believe the soul energy inside each person is what is responding to grounding—and here's why. Part of my training as a physician was getting called in the hospital to pronounce the time of death when a patient dies. I repeatedly witnessed this soul energy leaving the human body, leaving only the physical behind with no life force running through it, and each time it struck me what an immense difference there is in a body that has a soul illuminating it and a body that doesn't.

I saw that the difference was everything that made that person who they were. Nanoseconds after the soul leaves, the physical body (which has not yet begun to decay and could still be completely viable, each organ easily harvested to live on inside of another body that still has the life force running through it) is still completely intact, yet no healing modality on earth could save it. Not even grounding. If your body is not healing itself, nothing else can.

If you have an infection, there is no antibiotic that can fully clear the infection without help from your own immune system. Doctors rely on your body to clean up the infection, to rebuild new cells, to recover. If you have a cut, there is no number of stitches that a doctor can make that will heal the wound without your body's healing it. The stitches might hold the wound together, but it is your body that makes the first tenuous connective tissue threads that bond the tissues back together. It is your vascular system that reestablishes blood flow through the tissue. It is your skin that makes more of itself. If you have a broken bone, no thickness of cast can knit the broken pieces back together. Doctors rely on your bones to mend themselves. They may use pins, plates, brackets, or rods to hold them together while your body heals, but the break remains unless your bones heal the break.

Your body recovers its own equilibrium. Your body realigns with life and joy and health. This is so important. You heal yourself every single day simply by allowing your soul energy to flow through your physical body. And we all can boost this innate flow of energy through the body by focusing on boosting conductive health, through grounding. Your body is perfectly designed for this! It is a healing machine. And the conductivity of the body, the flow of energy through the body, is what maintains this

health. Armed with this information, trusting in your own body to recover its own health, and seeing medications and surgeries and supplements as supporting staff only—helpful, but not what truly heals you—this framework gives you the most accurate and most powerful stance from which to allow healing to flow.

I truly feel there is something beyond this physical world that allows our souls to temporarily inhabit our bodies and have a healthy living experience. And I see healing modalities as supporting the vibrancy of that soul energy. If we focus on supporting the soul energy strength, that's the best thing we can do to ensure that healing and wellness abound. Because it's the soul's strength that brings the cells, tissues, organs, and entire body to life. Without it, the body will not continue to function. As a physician, I find that very exciting, because that means healing is always pouring through you. You, your soul, and your divine soul's journey are the direct healing elements.

A Note About Using Words to Describe the Intangible

In this book, you will read my personal word choices to describe how grounding supports our soul energy, our soul's passion or calling, and inspires a greater expression of innate creativity. It deepens our connection to the divine, to other souls we love and share relationships with on this earth and beyond this earth. Please, as you read, do substitute your own inner knowing about what life and spirituality mean to you. Grounding supports every human version of truth. The best thing about spirituality is that we don't have to agree on anything; we don't have to have the same version of what is true for us, and we don't even have to understand it. We can call divine presence by many names, think there is no divinity, be unsure whether it exists, or passionately feel there is divine guidance and have a specific vision of what this looks like—grounding works to support the human body's function, all the same.

You don't have to resonate with my chosen terms to reap the benefits of this healing modality. Use God, Yahweh, Allah, Almighty, Holy Spirit, Creator, the universe, Mother Earth, Mother Nature, divine intelligence, a

different term not listed here, or none of these at all. In whatever way you see the flow of healing through your body, and whether you feel there is a bigger presence here or not makes absolutely no difference in how your body can and will respond to time spent grounded. There is great healing waiting for you through the practice of touching the earth directly.

Activities for Grounding: Anytime, Anyplace

After I recommend that my patients spend time touching the earth each day to help boost their health, I am repeatedly asked what they should do when they walk outdoors. When the weather is nice and mild, many patients are willing to give it a try. But what about when conditions are less than ideal?

- If the weather is scorching hot, or worse, icy cold, what do you do then?
- What if you have no access to grass or a private yard?
- What if you live in a city, with nothing but concrete outside?
- Are there ways to do more than just stand there, barefoot and bored?

I have worked creatively with these conditions to come up with many ways to get grounded when it's too cold, too hot, whether cityside or countryside. I can even offer ways to use time spent grounding to intentionally cultivate certain health benefits: drawing closer to Mother Nature, boosting mood, increasing creativity—heck, even supporting your fertility!

Year round, you can ground. Plus, each season brings its own unique and wonderful physical, emotional, and spiritual elements. In addition to supporting health, the seasons offer ways to boost our direct experience of how it feels to be alive, express our own inner heart song, use our voice, feel in concert with the world around us, and be part of the universe beyond that.

You can achieve all of these goals just by giving the earth a chance to touch you and effect positive change, in just minutes a day. My first advice to you, as you begin diving into this book, is to track the change

you feel. You can find a baseline grounding assessment and a monthly grounding tracker (as well as guided meditations for each season) online at http: //www.newharbinger.com /44895.

You are holding an idea book, something you can flip through to find inspirations that send you outside with joy and excitement. Far from a conventional medical treatment—which may well be boring, possibly even painful, and filled with potentially toxic side effects—healing with the earth can be a wonderful, fun, uplifting, and immediately gratifying experience. If you flip through this book, open it to the current season, skim for an idea that grabs your attention, and feel excited to head outside and get grounded today, than I will have accomplished what I wish most for you.

You are certainly welcome to read this book in order, cover to cover, but you are also welcome to flip through it and randomly select an idea that piques your interest and suits the weather or your mood. I want you to never run out of uplifting and fun ways to get back in touch with your own body’s ability to heal. Grounding is exactly that—linking your physical body to the earth to unleash its own resiliency. I love grounding for that; there is no other healing tool in my experience as universally helpful as grounding, and I’m excited for you to give it a try.

PART ONE:

Why Is Grounding So Healing?

CHAPTER 1:

We Are Conductive Beings: Earth Energy Always Moves Through Us

The earth is always there for us and always will be. It is a docking station for us, a port we can plug into to receive head-to-toe, inside-and-out support for our well-being. It waits for us to have no choice but to reach out to nature to ground, regroup, and heal.

We have all felt moments of desperation when we could think of nothing to do but immerse ourselves in the power of nature.

When I was about to start medical school, I was trapped in a wickedly abusive relationship that I knew I needed to end. I was overwhelmed by the rigorous educational path ahead of me and didn't think I could possibly make it through medical school with a broken heart as well. One night, feeling powerless to cut ties with someone I felt very in love with, I ran and ran and ran through the cold night air until I could run no more, trying to calm my anxious heart. I finally dropped to my knees with tears streaming down my face and just looked up at the stars overhead. I didn't know what to do next. I flopped down on the ground, stared up at the nighttime sky, and wished the entire earth would swallow me whole. What it did instead was much more generous…it held me.

It held a space for me, absorbed my tears, listened to my cries, supported my body as it soothed me. When I arose from that moment, I knew I could and would survive this grief. I broke up with my boyfriend, moved to a big city to start medical school, and poured my heart and soul into learning how to become a healer. The earth saved me that day.

As a physician, I have since learned the scientific basis for these comforting, grounding, centering, and often joyous experiences with the

earth. I thought the earth was just soothing my tortured heart, but now I realize it was having a very real effect on my body's function, as I'll share in the coming chapters. Although I immediately felt better on an emotional level, at that time I had no idea how powerfully it was supporting my physical well-being too.

Whether we heed our impulse to run wildly into tall grasses, swim passionately in a cold lake, float meditatively by the ocean's shore, seek shelter under strong mighty trees, find comfort in running our fingers and toes through the soil of a beloved garden bed, or just stand barefoot on a patch of grass, this contact changes everything about the health of our body in an instant.

The Earth Is an Energy Source

This happens because of the body's *conductivity,* a word that describes the flow of energy through a physical medium. Life on earth—and therefore health and healing—is all about conductivity. When energy flows through a cell in our body, the cell functions properly. In medicine, we are realizing that the body's conductivity can provide amazing and important information on its health status. Because all our organ systems are conductive, medicine has developed incredible ways to use this principle to determine an organ's health.

Our Conductive Brain

Consciousness, our awareness of our own existence, depends on conductivity for both self-actualization and basic cognition. Our central and peripheral nervous systems are conductive. Every single nerve cell must allow energy flow; if a neuron loses its conductivity—whether through diseases like peripheral neuropathy, or the demyelination of multiple sclerosis, or trauma like a spinal cord injury—it can't conduct a signal and stops functioning. Measuring nerve conductance on peripheral nerves provides extensive data about how each nerve is functioning.

The coordinating brain relies on conductivity from the rest of our body so it can respond to all the signals from so many systems and

function appropriately. If the heart wasn't conductive, it wouldn't know when to beat; if muscles weren't conductive, they wouldn't know when to move; if the diaphragm wasn't conductive, it wouldn't know when to take a breath.

Our entire sensory experience, from the things we see to the sounds we hear, comes from conductive impulses being transmitted to our brains. Even simple tests—like a hearing test—measure the conductivity of the inner ear and how well it can pick up on sound waves in the environment as they reach the cochlea.

Conductivity is also essential to sleeping, dreaming, and processing events to ready us for tomorrow. We absolutely need restorative sleep, a conductive state of being that our brain depends on to function. In medicine, we use electroencephalogram (EEG) machines to measure the electrical activity of the brain, which tells us incredible things about how the brain is functioning, shows us different brain wave patterns, tells us the brain's phase of sleep or wakefulness, and even helps diagnose seizure activity.

Our Conductive Heart

Without a conductive impulse, no blood would circulate through our body. Our heart relies on conductive signals from the brain to know when to beat, then carries those impulses to all its muscles so they contract in concert to produce a functional heartbeat. Blood is pushed along by the heart's strong beat, and the dilation and constriction of the peripheral vascular system carries nutrients and oxygen to the entire body. In fact, even the *viscosity* of the blood—its ability to move freely and to clot—depends on the conductivity of blood cells and the serum that carries them.

We measure the heart's conductivity with an electrocardiogram (EKG). This shows us linear and measurable data on the heart's electrical beating. Different parameters can predict the heart's health, heart rate, rhythm, heart rate variability (HRV), and other measurements that determine the health of our cardiac function and also predict likely long-term health after a heart transplant, cardiac arrest, or other major heart issues. We can even measure the zeta potential of red blood cells, which

tells us a lot about the viscosity (thickness) of the blood flow.

Our Conductive Lungs

The brain conductively signals the lungs to breathe, how deeply, and at what pace, and how to channel that breath through your vocal cords for speech, communication, and song. Without conductivity, your diaphragm wouldn't function to pull the breath in, your lungs wouldn't function to absorb oxygen from the air, and your blood wouldn't distribute this oxygen to your entire body.

Our Conductive Digestion

The digestive tract relies on conductive signals in smooth muscle, called peristalsis, to move food along. Without this, we wouldn't be able to chew and swallow food, or digest, process, and absorb nutrition. We also need conductive signals to know when we are hungry or thirsty.

Our Conductive Muscles

Movement relies on energy signals, because without conductivity not a single muscle in our body would move. Conductivity makes everything possible: heartbeat, breathing, digestion, speech, expression, mobility, movement, touch, hugs! Any and every movement you have ever made, from reaching out to your parents when you were a baby to climbing the tallest mountain on a trek across the world, relied on conductive impulses running through your muscles. We can use an electromyography (EMG) machine to measure and test the muscles' electrical activity.

Our Conductive Skin

Our skin relies on conductive signals to keep us safe and enrich our experience of life. Conductivity tells our brain immediately when there is danger to our physical well-being; the slightest wound to the skin, contact with dangerous heat or cold. It tells us immediately when there is support for our physical well-being—a hug from a friend, warm lips pressing

against yours in passion, a firm handshake when an agreement has been made… even the rooting reflex of an infant depends on conductivity to find the mother's breast to latch onto and nurse from. No mammal would survive without the skin's basic reflexes. We can measure skin conductance with a skin voltmeter.

Our Conductive Cells

Every organ system—indeed, every one of the thirty-seven trillion cells (and there are over two hundred cell types) in your body—relies on conductivity to function. Our cells respond to messages received by cellular membranes because of their electric potential differences. This creates enzymatic reactions, which can be measured in a laboratory. Cells' ability to divide and replicate—which enables the fresh, healthy flow of life—requires the signaling and teamwork of conductivity.

Everything, all the way down to the cytoplasm and cytoskeleton that creates a cell, is conductive. The cytoskeleton gives your cells their shape and retains its contents. It's like a micro-network of healing microtubules and filaments that speed healing instantly throughout the cell and communicate this healing to all the other cells. The cytoplasm that fills the cells is an electrolytic solution that buffers against harm and speeds supportive healing. Your entire cellular matrix is actually a conductive gel ready to heal you, directly and instantly.

Grounding Overcomes the Challenges of Other Forms of Healing

Because of this electrical interconnection throughout the entire body, conductive healing is direct healing. Even if your gut is so inflamed it can no longer absorb nutrients or medications, your entire GI tract is still conductive. It doesn't matter if your circulation is poor and you've had an obstructive blood clot—that blood clot itself is conductive. No matter what scars or physical limitations you have or what your emotional state is, every part of you is receptive to the earth's conductive support.

All doctors and healers rely on your body's systems to heal itself.

They rely on your circulation to distribute medications and nutritional support to diseased areas. Nutritionists, holistic health specialists, chiropractors, and massage therapists all rely on your body to deliver the therapy to the area in need. But healing can be limited, because the sicker the tissue or body part, the less circulation it gets and the more scar tissue and inflammation and infection advances the disease process.

Conductivity through grounding is singular in its universal healing efficacy. Every other healing modality is an indirect way to support healing and works for *some* people but not for others. Let's look at what happens when the systems that deliver healing to our body are limited and challenged.

Nutrition

Nutrition is indirect, relying on how capable your intestines are of breaking down and absorbing the food, supplements, and medications you ingest. If there is an allergy, sensitivity, inflammation, infection, autoimmune issue, or any other condition that decreases the gut's absorption, the gut itself can limit your healing.

Breathing

Breathing is crucial but is still indirectly healing—relying completely and totally on the circulatory system to deliver oxygen to wounded or diseased body parts, and even more on the lungs' ability to absorb the oxygen in the first place. If you have a condition that impairs your breathing, scarring on the lungs, or decreased lung perfusion (blood flow in the pulmonary capillaries), or have had a lung removed, your own lungs can limit healing.

Circulation

If you have a circulatory issue or a cardiac issue causing slowed circulation or ineffective heart pumping, your heart can be a limiting factor in healing.

When these indirect healing delivery systems are compromised by disease, illness, or injury, their performance is compromised as they contend with injury, inflammation, scar tissue, and fatigue. Thus the body itself can limit healing. Often the more urgent the health condition, the less the body is able to respond. Each healing modality depends on the body's health to process and use the support being offered. There is no…

- Surgery that everyone will respond fully to.
- Supplement that everyone will absorb and fully use.
- Chiropractic adjustment that works for everyone.
- Acupuncture point that will restore balance for all.
- Physical therapy move that will restore mobility to all.
- Food that everyone can tolerate, absorb well, and benefit from.

Every food, no matter how healthy, can be inflammatory to some and cause allergic responses in others. Even raw, straight-from-the-garden foods are not tolerated by everyone. I've been a physician long enough to see every food I've ever thought was the healthiest food on the planet—from organic blueberries to organic kale—create an allergic reaction, or an inflamed gut, or chemical or heavy metal exposure for someone. Every body is different.

I've trained in an intensive care unit with the most advanced medical equipment at our disposal, and I've learned that there is no substitute for a conductive body. At the hospital, we can hook you up to a ventilator to take over your breathing, feed you intravenously bypassing the mouth and esophagus, and jump start your heart with the shock of electric paddles. We can funnel in fluids and nutrients and electrolytes and antibiotics to help boost your immune system. But a body that does not conduct its own electrical impulses and does not generate its own healthy signals to optimize function just won't heal.

Grounding Is the Most Direct Way to Heal

Because our cells are innately conductive, even when working poorly they

lose none of their conductivity. So the healing pathway of conductivity never diminishes or fails, even if you are gravely ill. You are as conductive as ever, and instantaneously so!

Decreased systemic functioning is not an issue in conductive healing through grounding. Even scar tissue is conductive—the collagen, fibrin, fibrinogen, and capsules that surround and wall off injured parts of us are all conductive. Supporting your body's conductive health instantly turns these barriers into treatment pathways, as it uses the connective tissue that keeps out other, less direct treatment modalities. Connective tissue is central to conductive healing, as it holds every part of us together.

The body's perpetual state of renewal depends on conductivity. Tissues are constantly repairing, regenerating, and optimizing. Whatever health reality you are dealing with has the incredible potential to shift and change and repair and release. Our body functions by constantly flowing fresh new healing potential through itself, offering a continuous opportunity to heal and repair. But because your health depends on a constant supply of new cells to replace the old, maintaining your body's well-being depends on the ability to constantly generate and refresh tissues and organs.

Because the body is electrically conductive, the heartbeat, brain impulses, breathing mechanism, and digestion all rely on intrinsic electrical signals. To protect the body throughout our lifetime, we must establish and nurture a healthy conductivity.

Grounding Maintains the Flow of Releasing Back into the Earth

As we go through our days, all the wear and tear, stress, activity, inflammation, and damage that accrues in our body from the activities of daily life builds up within us. If we are not discharging this tension to the earth, we are accumulating it. Simple as that. We need to discharge our inflammation to counteract wear and tear over time. It's simply unnatural for the human body to remain ungrounded for long periods.

Modern life insulates us from the earth, as we live indoors and off the

ground, shielded from direct contact even when outdoors by rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires. We are forcing our bodies to act as a closed loop, disconnected from the earth. The body becomes a dead end for all of the inflammation, free radicals, and oxidative damage we accrue each day.

When we don't touch the earth, over time we build up resistance to conductive flow. All electrical systems that we use have to be designed with a ground, to allow the current to flow. The system must be shielded from static buildup. To function without short-circuiting from static buildup, which over time causes malfunction in any closed-loop system, the system must be grounded to dissipate and prevent damage.

Just like these electrical systems, our body needs grounding relief to function optimally over a lifetime. Otherwise it becomes a closed-loop system, accruing inflammation just as an ungrounded circuit accrues a static charge. Over time, having an ungrounded electrical circuit will damage the unit, and it will stop functioning. An ungrounded human body will acquire tissue damage over time and stop functioning properly.

We can and do function when disconnected from the earth, but at grave costs to our organ efficiency over time. Pain, inflammation, and chronic disease all skyrocket when we do not dock our body to the earth. The resistance that our body builds up is just too great without discharging it. Our body begins to slow as inflammation begins to build up, energy levels begin to droop, and metabolism and metabolic processes slow to a halt. Metaphysically, some believe that without constant renewal our soul energy, no longer freshly flowing into a pure vessel, becomes backed up. The system becomes sluggish and ultimately stops functioning well.

This is almost entirely reversible. Effortlessly, easily, and for free. How do I know? Not only from personal experience, and not only from professional experience with my own patients, but from decades of large-scale medical studies. The first studies on the healing benefits of grounding the human body were published over two decades ago. Those results provided a strong foundation of medical knowledge that reflects something intuitive that mankind has always known: that the earth is a healing presence for those who reconnect with it.

Grounding Is a Powerful Conductive Practice

When we touch the earth, we immediately stop being a clogged dead end for all of this inflammatory damage, so full of resistance that we can no longer flow fresh energy through our bodies. Instead, we become the flowing expression of life that we were meant to be.

The oldest conductive therapy of all time is more natural and accessible than anything modern science can come up with. Supporting your conductivity simply involves going out your front door and touching the earth to ground yourself. It's your birthright, a resource that no one can take away from you. Touching the earth immediately affects the conductivity of the entire body, supporting the healthy functions of heart, circulatory system, brain, bone metabolism, thyroid, adrenals, and skin—the entire body.

Supporting our body's conductivity is the single best thing we can do to support our long-term well-being. I've been a physician for over nineteen years now. During all that time, I've come across only this one healing modality that supports the entire body in such a powerful way. Everything else provides indirect health benefits, but grounding directly to the earth means your body is directly healing. Because it works directly and instantaneously, grounding is the only healing modality I know of that works for everyone, every time.

This book is a guide to incorporating the principle of conductive healing into your own life through grounding. I'll tell you how grounding benefits you on every level and will give you many easy, effective ways to get grounded.

CHAPTER 2:

The Whole-Being Support We Receive from Deep Connectivity

One day my children and I went to the home of another mother (who is an energy healer) for a playdate. She and I were hanging out, chatting about the stress of balancing being mothers with work. She noticed my energy was very high and centered in my head and recommended that I ground my energy down into my body as a way to transition into patient care. She meant for me to take a deep breath, center my awareness in my body's core, and feel the intuitive connection of my body to the earth, to get me out of my head space and into my heart space before approaching my patients.

This resonated with me on emotional and physical levels. "Get grounded": something just clicked in me. *Grounded…*I pondered that word. I went home and searched on "grounded" in the medical literature. Article after article popped up on the healing effects of grounding.

It was like the sun rising. I realized exactly what I had been doing to support my children's health since becoming a mom. Grounding was indeed a well-studied, effective physical healing modality that was just being rediscovered. This gave me goosebumps.

What Science Says About Grounding's Benefits

I devoured the medical literature on grounding. We have exhaustively studied the human body when grounded and learned that it immediately goes into a healing state. Here is a high-level summary of the findings (to explore the studies and their findings in depth, visit my website, Intuition-Physician.com).

With grounding, blood viscosity decreases, blood pressure normalizes, brain wave patterns relax, muscle tension drops, pain lifts, and mood lightens. Because grounding immediately improves cardiovascular function, every organ system gets a boost of blood flow and oxygen. Over time, hormones normalize, cortisol drops, blood sugar stabilizes, sleep deepens, inflammation decreases, and the body heals.

- We benefit from grounding with a boosted heart rate variability (HRV)1, increasing blood perfusion of our tissues,2 and blood that flows more easily.3
- Our immune system gets a boost.4
- Our muscles are more supported during exertion5 and are less sore afterward.6
- Our brain gets much needed support immediately. EEG studies of brain activity show that grounding instantaneously shifts our brain wave patterns and reduces ambient stress levels7 along with supporting deeper, more restorative sleep at night8 and improving our body's autonomic function too.9
- Grounding supports our metabolic function as a whole.10 Adrenal function, thyroid function, sex hormones, even a leaky gut—it's all interconnected.
- Grounding resolves the cascade of inflammation and autoimmune signaling in hormonal pathways that ultimately lead to thyroid issues, adrenal depletion, and out-of-whack reproductive hormones that cause us to feel less than our best. Grounding beneficially affects adrenal (cortisol) and sex hormone issues (PMS/perimenopause) and thyroid issues (like hypothyroidism).11

I have conducted my own research and prescribed the healing practice of grounding to every patient I felt could be helped by it. Turns out, that's every single patient I have ever had. Whether they were seeking medical care for chronic headaches, diabetes, metabolic issues, pain issues, heart disease, digestive issues, you name it—grounding helped support their recovery.

A Modality That Honors Our Connected Systems

It’s not just your physical body that is being supported. It’s also your frame of mind, your soul energy, your spirit. I believe that life is soul energy actively flowing through the body, and nothing can flow through a closed circuit once it is clogged up, not even your soul energy.

When plants are grounded, growing up out of the earth, they grow two to three times as tall and bloom more, and even the blossoms last longer than plants grown disconnected from the earth in ungrounded containers of potting soil. When humans are grounded, we feel much more vibrant and healthy and energetic as we do when ungrounded. The plant world expresses grounded support by vibrant growth; we express grounded support by vibrant health!

Just as we know that being disconnected causes everything from depression to inflammation to accelerated aging, the reestablishment of grounding your body to support your health has ramifications that go well beyond any single parameter or indicator of physical health. You feel more:

- Energetic
- Supported
- Creative
- Connected
- Inspired
- Optimistic
- Strong
- Motivated
- Loving
- Loved

Nothing else quite allows you to become the pure positive vessel of well-being the way grounding does. You become open to your soul energy

flowing deeply, and meeting your body at its core, infused into every cell. You become an ideal balance of a supported, healthy physical body and an open vessel holding the most vibrant state of your soul's energy, flowing through your body and resonating from your center.

In that specific union—of your unique physical body and soul energy—everything comes together to be totally supported by the earth's healing energy flow. That is your optimal state of well-being.

When your soul energy is flowing freely through a grounded, balanced body, your well-being is optimized and you can offer so much more of yourself to the world. You can radiate much more creativity and kindness, enjoy greater connection with others, offer more abundant love, and have a greater impact. You can more fully offer the world what you are here to offer, express what you want to express, and live the unique, meaningful life you are meant to live.

So ultimately, grounding is not just about your cardiac function, hormonal balance, sleep quality, or bone strength. Grounding is about finding a center so deep, pure, and strong that you can be the best possible you.

Becoming an Open Circuit

Most medical modalities focus on supporting either the physical body or the spiritual body or the emotional body, but not all at the same time. Therefore even though you are working to heal with other medical treatments, you are still in a closed loop that will lose function over time.

- The physical support of nutrients, vitamins, fluids, exercises, and so on over time will still not be able to fully dissipate the resistance and damage accruing in an ungrounded body.
- The emotional support of talk therapy, psychology modalities, and cognitive behavioral therapies to move stuck feelings does not necessarily physically release tension or trauma from your body's organs and tissues.
- The spiritual support of prayer, meditation, communion, love,

connection, and spiritual growth will still not be able to push past a closed vessel so full of resistance and inflammatory damage in the physical tissues that no more fresh soul energy can enter.

A closed-loop system is finite and destined to decline. No other modality does the simultaneous physical, emotional, and spiritual work that grounding does. Most people start their grounding journey because they need an answer that offers more support than any one single medication or operation or vitamin or exercise can offer. They have found conventional medicine insufficient to correct the multilevel ailments caused by disconnection from the earth. And most people find that when they reconnect, their whole-being wellness improves.

Connect to the earth. You don't want to be the final destination of energy—you are not a dead end. You are a conductive avenue for connection to expression and life! As you become an open vessel for energy flow, you will feel yourself come back into balance.

When you begin your grounding journey, do not limit your expectations in any way. Allow the supportive energy of Mother Earth to fill you up, open you up, and support you. Allow your entire body, mind, heart, and spirit to be transformed. While just sitting there is great, if you can be involved and interactive, so much the better. So give yourself permission to get dirty.

Ways to Ground Yourself for Your Well-Being Challenges

Knowing this, how can we use grounding as a health practice? Understanding the benefits can give you different ideas on approaching grounding for your own healing, no matter what you want to improve. Discuss your particular health concerns with your physician and include grounding as an integral part of your healing therapies. Here are some examples.

Stress/burnout: plan a grounded vacation. Feeling stressed affects every cell in your body and impacts your health over time. To boost your

resiliency, in addition to routine exercising, sleeping well, and eating lots of fresh, unprocessed foods, taking a grounding vacation can reset your body very quickly. A vacation centered on grounding for hours each day is the best way to hit the reset button in your life. When you have hit a wall, whether spiritually, physically, or emotionally, plan a vacation around your favorite way to get grounded. That could be lying on a beach, swimming in a lake, napping poolside, yoga in a meadow, or hiking in the mountains. Even a long weekend is better than nothing. Almost every vacation destination has become one because of how good it feels to be grounded, even though most people don't realize it. Beaches, lakeside resorts, campgrounds, exotic in-ground concrete pools in fancy hotels—it's all grounded, and it all feels amazing. Grounding decreases cortisol and whole-body inflammation and significantly boosts mood—all helpful to decrease your stress levels and restore your naturally energetic, creative, and optimistic inner child.

Digestive issues: eat meals grounded outside. As a physician I see it every day: digestive issues of all kinds, from inflammatory bowel diseases to food sensitivities and food intolerances, are on the rise. Steeply. In addition to the food allergy testing, blood tests, and bowel imaging studies that your physician will want to do as part of your work-up, and complementary to the dietary changes, medications, and lifestyle interventions your physician may suggest as a treatment plan, I encourage you to eat at least one meal every day grounded outside and go on a short grounded walk after each meal. Grounding decreases inflammation throughout your entire body, and your gut lining is no exception. Decreasing the inflammatory response of the gut by grounding while you are eating is a great way to allow your food to digest more easily and with less discomfort, and because grounding increases blood flow, your gut absorption will be enhanced. Lastly, taking ten minutes to walk grounded after your meal will help boost gut peristalsis naturally, which encourages healthy bowel movements and decreases bloating and indigestion.

Insomnia: ground in first morning light. If you find you have trouble sleeping at night, make a daily habit of grounding in the morning light. Getting up and getting sunlight (even when it's cloudy) on your face helps deepen sleep that night, and grounding to the earth helps resync your

circadian rhythm with the planet. We know from the medical literature that grounding calms brain waves, deepens sleep, normalizes cortisol, and makes the sleep you do get (even if it is not as long as you would hope) more restorative. Get up with the sunrise and go outside for twenty minutes of grounded sun exposure. Do this daily, and you will notice your sleep naturally improving at night. This works in concert with any conventional medical treatment your physician might suggest and can complement everything from a sleep study work-up, to correcting sleep apnea with a CPAP machine, to sleep-inducing supplements and medications.

Anxiety: ground during panic attacks. Because grounding immediately starts stabilizing your autonomic nervous system and boosting your vagal tone (much more about this later), it has the power to instantly calm your racing heart and deepen your breathing. So you might call it the perfect adjunctive support during panic attacks and heightened anxiety states. Along with conventional evaluation and treatment—therapy, medication, exercise, and mind-body work—grounding is an instantly accessible healing tool to provide immediate support during anxiety, any time, anywhere. If you feel a panic attack approaching, stop everything and touch the earth. Pull over if you are driving, go outside if you are home or at work or in a crowded shop or restaurant, and let the stability of the earth ease your panic and calm your anxiety with its power.

Depression: ground daily (*this is crucial)*. Grounding is a wonderfully uplifting way to balance your mood, support your central nervous system, and release chronic inflammation and chronic stress that wears and tears on your body and mind. Ongoing research is revealing the role of inflammation in depression: higher levels of blood markers of inflammation are directly correlated with depressive symptoms including sleep difficulty, decreased energy levels, decreased motivation, and increased or decreased appetite.12 Another study found that anti-inflammatory drugs helped to lessen depressive symptoms and resolve depressive episodes better than antidepressants alone when added to anti-depressant therapy.13 Grounding is not only anti-inflammatory and brain stabilizing but also boosts mood and energy levels and can work in conjunction with any physician-suggested therapy, medication, or

treatment for depression. Ideally, get into a daily routine, rather than sporadic efforts, so benefits accumulate over time. Choose hobbies that get you outside routinely: gardening is a wonderful choice, whether it is flowers, herbs, or vegetables, nurturing something growing on this earth will have you grounding daily by default. Other ideas include bird watching, nature photography, stretching or journaling outside, or simply listening to music, headphones on and your bare feet in the grass. Who knew something so therapeutic could be so incredibly enjoyable?

Back pain: use the earth as your physical therapist. Back pain is one of the most common reasons people visit a doctor's office. No matter what treatment plan your physician recommends, from imaging studies to physical therapy to surgery to medications, grounding can expedite your recovery and decrease pain from injury and inflammation in your spine. Consider the earth your very own physical therapist, as you lie grounding directly on the earth. We know that routine grounding decreases pain and whole-body inflammation, including inflammation and pain in your bones, ligaments, and tendons. Your entire spine—vertebral bones, discs, ligaments, nerves—is conductive, and all of your joints and the fluid in them are conductive. Grounding spinal care can be as simple as lying on the earth with an ice pack or a hot water bottle held to tight areas, or you can add some gentle twists, stretches, and release exercises and any physical therapy and rehabilitative exercises you've been given. Adding grounding to your stretching or rehab exercises makes them exponentially more effective than doing them indoors. Even if all you do is go stretch on the earth outside while you wait for your pain medication to take effect, you are supporting repair to your body's skeletal system on a much deeper level than just masking pain with a pill. Of course, you don't need to have back pain to begin supporting your body's longevity. Grounding decreases soreness and wear and tear on the body over the long term, so it's the best preventive medicine we have.

Trauma: meditate grounded. Meditation has repeatedly been medically proven to reduce PTSD symptoms just as well as, or better than, traditional therapeutic approaches, including talk therapy and exposure therapy.14 Even a quick and easy meditation technique like mantra repetition outperformed talk therapy in reducing PTSD symptoms—even

for hard-to-treat symptoms such as insomnia.15 If you struggle with prolonged meditation, know that simply taking a few minutes to repeat a positive word or phrase with awareness can reap huge benefits in trauma recovery. And for exponential benefits, combine mantra and meditation with grounding outside. Try sitting on the earth and focusing on your breath. The proven results of grounding—adrenal recovery, deeper sleep, lower stress hormones, and better vagal tone—all can provide relief and boost resiliency in the face of trauma.

Rehabilitation/arthritis/joint issues: ground in water. Taking weight off of your area of injury to allow it to recover and removing the force of gravity from stressing your joints means that healing can be more gentle *and* more effective. While you work on building strength, recovering mobility, and increasing range of motion, water buffers your skeletal system from the force of gravity, and almost all cement-lined pools and certainly all natural bodies of water are grounded. In-ground pools made from concrete are all grounded, so most pools in hotels, gyms, and private backyards provide therapeutic grounding support to your body, as long as they are not lined with plastic or made from plastic. We know that not only does grounding decrease inflammation and pain, but during exertion it decreases damage done to muscles and mitigates how much soreness you experience later. This means you can participate more fully in your water-based recovery plan without worrying about being as sore or in pain later, so you can be more invested in your healing sessions and see results faster. And all the while, the grounded water's support and resistance increases muscle strength.

Heart disease: exercise grounded. The link between exercise and heart health has long been studied, so most physicians will prescribe some sort of exercise plan for their patients with cardiovascular disease and/or cardiovascular risk factors. If you are in this group, be sure to add a grounded form of exercise to your healing plan—a free way to upgrade its effectiveness. Grounding outside on the earth can work synergistically with the therapies, interventions, and/or medications your cardiologist recommends to help naturally increase circulation and blood flow, decrease clotting and blood viscosity, increase heart rate variability, and reduce soreness after exercise. This benefits not only your entire

cardiovascular system but all of your bodily organs from the improved blood flow. Try walking grounded, grounding through your hands while outdoor exercising (for example, while playing golf or hiking), or doing fun barefooted exercises outside such as tai chi, yoga, dance, or even lifting weights (and your garage floor is likely to be grounded, so it's good to keep your weights in the garage and use them there). If you are on blood thinners, be sure to tell your physician you are grounding daily and to follow your lab tests closely. Your blood thinner dose may need to be decreased as your blood naturally moves more freely with daily time spent grounded; your physician should monitor your results and guide this adjustment.

Osteoporosis: do yoga grounded. Whereas exercising in water avoids the wear and tear of gravity on your joints, to build bone density you actually need resistance or weight training. Simply using gravity is a wonderful way to maintain strong bones for a lifetime, and combining this with the healing power of grounding will reduce bone metabolism to help protect your bones over time. Any poses that allow you to place weight on your hands—such as tabletop, plank, chaturanga, reverse tabletop, and downward facing dog, plus inversions such as forward fold, crow pose, and head, hand, and shoulder stands—are an invaluable daily habit to get into. Not only does doing these grounded outside add the additional element of conductive health to your bone support, but the daylight you get while outside naturally boosts your vitamin D levels, which are crucial for bone integrity. All these benefits in one twenty-minute yoga session—to me that is a win-win-win!

Cancer recovery: walk grounded. Several positive studies show that walking is one of the best things you can do to recover from, and prevent remission after, cancer treatment. In a large medical study, walking was shown to significantly improve cancer patients' sleep quality (no matter the type or stage of cancer); another study showed that walking improved outcomes, decreased mortality rates, and predicted positive outcomes in cancer recovery.16 Walking for just twenty minutes a day was all that was necessary for the positive results in these studies. Walking helps reverse sleep impairment during cancer treatment, supports better sleep during recovery, and is so good at improving outcomes that it could be

considered front-line therapy alongside conventional medical treatment. If you remove your shoes so that those twenty minutes of walking are barefoot, you will effortlessly add grounding to your therapeutic plan. Grounding can compound these results with decreased pain and inflammation; deeper, more restorative sleep at night; and improved energy and mood. If you have a pet, the regular walking that a dog requires, and the petting that dogs, cats, and other pets enjoy (if you want to ground through your pet, more on this in coming chapters) for just twenty minutes a day can generate the same positive results.

I hope you can see how integral a grounding practice can be for your health, no matter what your health care treatments are. That's why I prescribe it for my patients as a crucial part of every healing plan. Studies have offered convincing proof of the profound power of grounding to alleviate suffering from a wide range of ailments and issues. I urge you to consider your newfound grounding practice as not only a holistic spiritual endeavor but also a worthwhile (and mandatory) part of your physical health regimen.

Take Your Activities Outside

Whatever therapeutic and healing daily practices you use to support your health, consider doing them outside, so you can get the double hit of supportive relief from the activity as well as from the grounding contact. Many therapies are even more powerful when done outside. All of these can be taken outside:

- Your physical therapist's set of daily stretches
- Your psychologist's daily journal writing assignment
- Your massage therapist's suggestion to drink more water
- Your physician's directive to get more exercise: swim, do yoga, or walk grounded
- Meals and snacks recommended by your nutritionist, eaten outdoors
- Daily meditation suggested by your spiritual director
- Time spent with a good friend

- Together time with your partner—hold hands on that grounded walk
- Playtime with your kids
- Catch-up work on your laptop in the evening

Ground with Intention

It's important to have the *intention* for grounding to change more than just your physical body but to begin to transform your life. Coupling an intention with the process makes it much more powerful. So, for example, as you're standing there on the earth, if you have pain of any kind, or nausea, or a headache, or stress; whatever it might be, visualize the earth draining it off of your body for you. The earth can hold your pain, your stress, and your fears and wash them away. While you're there, you might as well talk directly to the earth. You can scream, you can cry, you can lean on it for support. There's really nothing the earth isn't there to hold for you. Visualize the earth removing the inflammation and stress and anxiety, and see how much better you feel. Give yourself permission to find a space on the earth that you can fall in love with, and hold that commitment to meeting with the earth there every day.

Live Your Full Potential and Purpose

We can have so much more energy when we are flowing our soul energy through this optimized human body that feels the best it can feel. And so we can go out into this world and radiate much more goodness, much more creativity, and much more soul purpose. And that's really the point of optimizing your well-being: so you can offer what you are here on this planet to offer, in this time and space. You can live what you are here to live.

All human beings are creative. Adults and children, we all need creative expression, the ability to put something into the world that would not otherwise be there if it weren't specifically for us. It is impossible for someone else to be us, to offer what we offer, think the thoughts we think, feel the feelings we feel, and interact and connect exactly as we do,

because every single person is unique. There's never been anyone else like you, and there's never going to be anyone else like you. There's only you to be you. So plug in to your power source through grounding, and radiate your unique purpose.

Even though we have discussed numerous scientific studies that support the practice of grounding, the point isn't just to optimize your cardiovascular health, boost your metabolic health, or get better sleep. You want to optimize those things so you can feel vibrant and open to why you're here and what you want to express through your body in this lifetime. And that's what I think grounding does. I've seen it over and over again, I've experienced it personally in my own life, and I'm so excited that you're going to come along with me on this journey of connecting to our planet, so you can experience it too.

While you are optimizing your body's health, you are gaining a platform for the true richness of your spirit's energy and expression. Keep that in mind while you're having fun with the activities and meditations and explorations of grounding we'll be diving into in part two—seasonal exercises and activities to help boost your health and support your well-being. Because what you are doing is much deeper than that. The real point of grounding is to become a vessel of well-being, giving your soul energy a vibrant platform from which to spring, shine, and radiate.

CHAPTER 3:

A Sense of Spiritual Connection to All

I have prayed my entire life for definitive spiritual proof of something more to human existence than one short lifetime on this tangible planet Earth. I wanted to believe in heaven, souls, and eternity, but the scientific side of my mind just could not make the leap of faith without more definitive proof.

I received the verification I yearned for, delivered right into my arms the day I gave birth. I'll never forget the first time I truly looked into another person's face and saw their soul looking directly back at me. It was like time stood still. I wasn't just holding my daughter's earthly body in my arms; I was holding her soul that was flowing through her body, pulsing life out from the great beyond. Looking eye to eye, soul to soul. It's no coincidence that she was how I discovered grounding, because to me, grounding is a spiritual awakening of a similar magnitude.

Nurtured by Our Mother Earth

The earth gives rise to all of life as we know it and nurtures us with everything we need to survive—air, water, food, and shelter. Just as the earth hosts the creative expression of life, women host the creative expression of human life, providing oxygen, fluids, and shelter to growing babies in the womb—much like the earth, offering physical support to optimize the well-being of our offspring growing within us.

So it makes a beautiful full circle that the first time I mothered a child, she showed me the way to connect with the health of Mother Earth. Through my connection to her and my empathy with her colicky discomfort, I sought refuge and comfort from the earth itself. Standing

outside, barefoot on the ground, with my infant in my arms, I found healing. And I could offer a more direct healing to my child in a different way than ever before, even as she developed inside my body and I supported her through an umbilical cord full of my breath and my blood.

When I held her in my arms as I stood on the earth, I could conductively pour the grounded healing flow directly into her body and witness the instantaneous results first hand. I felt stronger and more able to be a centered, responsive, sensitive, loving, nurturing mother—not only from the physical support from planet earth but also from Mother Earth's energetic support.

Though I began my journey with grounding by becoming a mother, you don't have to be a woman, or a parent, to feel your creative flow boosted from time spent in contact with the earth. We are all creative. We are all vibrant. We all nurture others in different ways. We all contribute. We all can feel our well of creativity surge and overflow with inspiration, ingenuity, and inventiveness as we bring something to this planet that would otherwise go missing without our original and unique contribution.

Longing to Connect to Life Energy Itself

We have an innate craving to ground, to feel centered, secure, and held. That feeling of support, of being nurtured, that the earth provides. You know that feeling after you've been walking on the beach all day or you spend the morning gardening or the evening having a picnic dinner outside. You just feel so cradled and nurtured. We're able to exist on this planet because the earth provides for us and supports us. And you know that. You feel that on a soul level.

When we live out of contact with the earth, we develop a deep craving that becomes a chronic condition that is difficult to name. We know only that something is missing. Most people then think, *I must be hungry, but nothing is satiating me.* When you reach for food, you are getting nourishment from the earth, but only indirectly. People get addicted to eating, as they are indirectly getting some form of nourishment from the planet that is partially satisfying on a soul level, but never truly, sustainably satisfying. So the craving goes unfulfilled, no matter how

much you eat.

I believe that people try to ground themselves indirectly by putting on more weight. To feel heavier. To sink down. To get that feeling of touching the earth, but without taking off their shoes. They're trying to get it without sitting on the earth or even being outside. So it seems to make sense to eat more and to have more presence on the earth. But that doesn't satisfy the craving.

When you start grounding daily, you start feeling centered, connected, and secure as never before. You find you really didn't need the security blanket of food or other addictions that you thought you did. You begin to notice, in every aspect of your life, this comforting feeling washing over you.

We all depend on the earth to be healthy, to be alive right here and right now. We all really need that contact with the earth to feel balanced and fulfilled. Now, after almost two decades of using grounding to support the health of my patients, I can see the deep comfort, the satisfied cravings, the creative and energetic boost that grounding brings. I've witnessed patients who had trouble conceiving become pregnant after starting to ground. I've witnessed patients who had lost their inner spark of joy have that spark reignited after they start to ground. I've had patients who felt depressed, or lost, or hopeless, or disheartened become uplifted, found, energized, and warmed by time spent connecting to the nurturing flow of the earth.

I have repeatedly witnessed in others what I myself experienced first-hand: that the earth boosts both our physical well-being and the vibrancy of our life force in deeply satisfying ways.

Without grounding, we can feel wired, frazzled, unsupported, depressed, and anxious. With the earth firmly anchoring our body, relieving inflammation, stabilizing our hormones, and supporting our organ functions, our life's journey becomes deeper and more meaningful, filled with inspiration and power.

When I touch the earth I can feel that energy, that inspiration and life force boost directly flowing through my body. When you are a vessel for the synergy of the earth's energy and your own unique spirit, body, and

soul energy—that is an optimal state of well-being. No vitamin supplements and no amount of deep breathing and meditating can produce this state the way grounding does.

The Spiritual Connecting Points in Our Feet

It's pure joy to connect to the earth, because we are hardwired to ground by our anatomy. Did you know the soles of your feet have the highest density of sweat glands in your entire body, to facilitate enhanced contact with the earth? Sweat is our body's natural way of coating our skin with a conductive electrolyte solution. As if that wasn't astounding enough, the soles of your feet also have one of the highest densities of nerve endings in the body. Our feet are sensory organs, second only to our lips in providing sensations and feedback to the brain. So the second most sensitive area of the body also naturally makes the highest amount of conductive fluid (sweat), so grounding is both powerful and pleasurable. Before rubber footwear came along and severed this daily interaction, mankind was totally aware of the creative life force that flows through the earth to us, for as far back as we have historical documentation.

- Egyptians used to wear ornamental decorations on the tops of their feet, purposely leaving the soles of their feet bare.
- Gods walked barefoot in ancient mythology, and the ancient Olympic games were performed barefoot.
- The religious custom of taking off shoes in holy places, particularly temples and mosques, is mentioned even in the Bible, where Moses was asked to take "thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy ground" (Exodus 3: 5).
- Native American tribes perform healing ceremonies that include barefoot dancing, chanting, drumming, and prayer…even barefoot pilgrimages.
- One of the most used acupuncture points, the K1 meridian, begins right in the center of the sole of the foot. So along with the high density of sensory nerve endings and sweat glands, this point facilitates our direct conductive connection with the earth.

> Stimulation of the K1 acupuncture point in Chinese medicine is connected with healing the kidneys, gastrointestinal tract, heart, lungs, and thyroid—all areas also impacted by grounding.

Humans have always honored the natural design of the foot as one of the most sensitive—and therefore receptive—body parts. Witness its symbolic significance in religious customs: kissing the feet and washing the feet display reverence and respect to the receiver.

Humans have innately coupled healing with directly touching the earth until very recently. It's not just that native and aboriginal cultures simply lack the ability or technology to live disconnected from the earth; quite the opposite. Not as a default lifestyle but as an intentional connection, many cultures have turned to walking on the earth for direct healing.

Just Being Outside Heals Us

Early modern medical practices prescribed weeks by the sea to speed healing. By the 1500s, seaside prescriptions were commonly given by physicians and this practice carried on for several centuries, which Richard Russel, MD, published officially in 1769 in his book on the healing properties of seawater to treat disease.[17]

Since modern medicine took charge of our western concept of health and healing, we seem to have forgotten this. But we are starting to hear more and more about how our disconnect from the earth is causing a disconnect from our innate wellness. Studies reveal how decreased time spent outdoors is associated with anxiety and depression, ADHD, high blood pressure, high cortisol, decreased immune function, decreased memory, and poor-quality sleep.

Time spent in nature correlates with improved health. Study after study show how restoring time in nature decreases mental illness,[18] improves mood,[19] decreases cortisol levels,[20] increases the body's natural anticancer protein levels and natural cancer killer activity,[21] decreases stress,[22] increases the attention span,[23] treats ADD[24] and ADHD,[25] lowers the heart rate,[26] and improves our overall wellness.[27]

Much of this is due to the direct effect of grounding the human body to boost conductive health, and to the soul support we receive when opening ourselves—mind, body, and soul—to energetic support that goes beyond the simple physical support of being grounded. We feel better. We feel uplifted. We feel energized. We feel centered.

When you are spending time outdoors on Mother Earth, your body reaches a neutral, open, receptive mode to fully support your soul's ability to pour through and radiate out from your body, so all of your movements, interactions, and actions align with your deepest purpose. When your body is in an openly healing state and your spirit is energetically open, the synergy creates a deep feeling of satisfaction and meaning, fulfilling our deep craving to lead meaningful, creative, and intentional lives. Lives that matter. Lives that make a difference.

Uniting with the Earth Through Meditation

Deep, relaxed yet attentive states, like those achieved through prolonged meditation, change the electrical activity of the brain to enhance the alpha waves of the brain on an EEG. These are a frequency similar to the heartbeat of the earth, which resonates at 7.83 Hz, otherwise known as the Schumann resonance. When our brains are relaxed, open, alert but nondirected, they are in complete sync with Mother Earth, and this resonance makes meditation a deeply healing state. Like touching the earth, meditation allows our brains to open, fall silent, awaken to the earth's frequency by getting into the alpha frequency—the state of pure, positive well-being.

Many studies have shown that this alpha brain frequency is the frequency of deep relaxation, which allows for spontaneous information in the mind to process and makes room for spontaneous information, not from external sensory input or cognitive, directed reasoning but from a deeper intuitive state of wholeness. If you want to get into a healing state that allows for a deeper resonance of your central nervous system with Mother Earth, practice mindful meditation while lying on the earth, grounded. This combines two different healing modalities into one beautiful exponentially healing state.

And grounding is the only modality I know that combines spiritual and physical healing in this way. Touching the earth directly connects your body to earth support. In an optimized state of healing, with spirit open to flowing soul energy, you become a complete vessel for wellness on all levels.

This is the power of connecting to our planet.

Ready to get started? Let’s go! The next four chapters give you countless ways to step outside and get started, no matter the season, the weather, or the environment.

PART TWO:

Grounding Practices You Can Do, All Year Long

CHAPTER 4:

Summer Fun in the Sun— with Ways to Keep Cool

When I was six, I got horribly lost in Hawaii. I was walking in a store with my parents when suddenly I turned down an aisle and realized I could no longer see them anywhere. My heart started pounding. My hands started sweating. My legs started to tremble. I thought for a moment and remembered a big koi pond in front of our hotel. I had no idea what direction that was in or how far away it was, but I knew if I could make it back to that pond I could sit there, with the fish, and wait for my parents to return to our hotel. I would be safe as long as I found that clear, glassy water and the beautiful, colorful fish swirling around under its surface.

I took a huge, shaking breath, pushed the shop doors open, and walked onto a sidewalk in the middle of Honolulu. I had never been alone in a city before, and cars drove by terrifyingly fast. It started to rain, my hair got wet, and I was so cold I was trembling. I remember that every time I saw a police car up ahead, I would walk closer to whatever group of people was on the sidewalk ahead of me, tucking up behind them so I wouldn't look lost and alone. Trying to look like I belonged somewhere, to someone. I walked and walked…and then there it was. The pond.

I went up to the edge of the water. There were my fish, who would keep me company until I was back with my family. They bobbed up to the surface, giving me a silent message: "You are in the right place. We aren't going anywhere. You are okay." I knelt at the side of that pond for seemingly forever, my fingers playing in the water, getting tickled by fish nibbles as I tried to pet them. My heart rate slowed down, calm washed over me, and I felt protected by something much bigger. I no longer felt alone or scared. I lost track of time until I felt my father's strong arms hug

me and saw the joy in my mother's eyes, and I was folded once again into the security of my family. Two hours had gone by, and the earth had faithfully, steadfastly kept me company.

As a physician, almost forty years later, I recognize the power of grounding I experienced as I touched the water in the pond that day. Its direct, immediate support comes in the midst of any uncomfortable sensation, from physical to emotional pain, even right in the middle of a panic attack. Go out there and touch the earth. You will feel instantly supported by an immovable source of strength: our planet.

The Cooling Relief of Water

Summer is generally the best time to engage water as a grounding connection—there is no better time to seek the cooling relief of water than during the hottest months of the year! We feel naturally drawn to water for its elemental soothing and healing properties. We seek oceans, shores, lakes, rivers, and waterfalls; swim in pools; watch in awe as water in the sky (aka clouds) rolls by and rainbows are illuminated; catch raindrops on our tongues—all to quench our thirst for connecting to our planet through water.

Mineral water, in particular, boosts our conductivity instantly. The earth is covered in flowing mineral-rich water and even capped with ice at both poles. Similarly, our bodies are filled with conductive moisture.

Water, the ultimate expression of flow, is the main component in our bodies through our blood and spinal and lymphatic fluids. I've said that the soles of our feet contain the body's highest density of sweat glands. Sweat is a natural electrolytic solution constantly produced by our body to enhance skin conductivity to the earth, which helps decrease muscle tension and reduce soreness. Our out-breath is filled with expiratory moisture. When tears roll down our faces, emotional tension is transformed through this form of conductivity-enhancing relief. Water is a great facilitator for the flow of grief, and our tears actually enhance our connection to the earth. Both inside and outside, our bodies are primed to receive healing energy from the earth easily and effortlessly, grounding by default even when we are totally unaware of it.

So enhance your grounding experience by relating with water in the summertime, when it's so hot! Water is a welcome addition to summer play, no matter your age, so many of the suggestions in this chapter encourage you to seek out a body of water for grounding. Let's start!

Nurturing Practices

Each seasonal Nurturing Practices section offers suggestions for healthy routines that nurture your body through grounding particularly well in that season. During summer, this could be getting into a daily barefoot routine, finding a body of water to immerse yourself in, or going on a weekly nature walk.

Summer Activity 1: Walk Barefoot Daily

Materials: Bare feet.

Method: Take your shoes off and stand directly on the earth for ten minutes or more.

Summer is a great time, better than any other, to ditch your shoes. Most people switch from close-toed shoes to flip-flops when they are not at work, and they think this foot freedom is enough to restore their health. But even flip-flops will cut you off from the earth's healing flow, because they still have a layer of rubber breaking the contact between your skin and the ground. It doesn't matter how thin the flip-flop is; breaking contact with the earth means you are every bit as ungrounded as when wearing thick boots.

Every day, the first moment you possibly can, slip your feet out of whatever shoes you are wearing. If you have only a few minutes on your lunch break to stand outside barefoot, do it. If it's only a few minutes before bedtime to stand outside under the stars barefoot, do that. If you need to treat yourself to a pedicure before braving barefoot time, absolutely do that! Summer is a time to expose your feet and

connect.

Summer Activity 2: Get Wet with Water Play

Materials: A local, natural body of water: a river, stream, lake, beach, ocean, city water feature set on concrete, hose or sprinkler system in a local park or your yard, swimming pool with concrete walls (not plastic), always-present morning dew, or a cup of water to pour over ground you then stand on.

Method: Seek out a source of water that is safe to touch. Commit to at least one ten-minute session of grounding through water each week, all summer long. Stand, sit, or swim in the wetness for at least ten minutes to feel the health benefits accrue. You need to have only one cell of your body immerse in the water to reap the benefits—one toe in a puddle is every bit as grounding as floating your entire body in the ocean.

Find one way to ground in water this summer and make it part of your seasonal routine. You will find that grounding through water is exponentially powerful. With a safe haven to head for any day, the next time you have an active issue—be it PMS, a migraine that won't quit, a fibromyalgia flare, heartburn, or any chronic health issue—just gravitate to that wet space and give your body ten minutes of direct healing.

If you can't get head-to-toe wet or put on a bathing suit, don't hold back. It's enough to just stand barefoot on a bank, shore, or puddle where it is damp. There are lots of ways to enjoy water in nature without getting your entire body wet, whether mucking along a bank for tadpoles or minnows, looking for seashells, or skipping rocks along the water's surface! Also, make the most of morning dew. Stepping out onto the ground each morning, barefoot, while the earth is still damp is a great grounding routine that can last all summer and well into autumn.

If you can, submerge in water to combine grounding with the therapeutic effect of being supported by water. This decreases the effects of gravity to ease the wear and tear of weight on your joints, bones, and muscles. It also allows for deeper physical movement and play. Float, swim, tube, do water aerobics—the options are endless.

Summer Activity 3: Collect Treasures on a Seasonal Nature Walk

Materials: Thirty minutes of time to walk barefoot in a natural setting and a small table or space in your home.

Method: Weekly, walk around with an open mind and heart, looking for small treasures in nature to appreciate. Summertime collections might include feathers, beach glass, shells, driftwood, wildflowers, sand, leaves, clover leaves, and lists or photographs of animal tracks.

As you begin going on treasure walks in nature, designate a small area of your home to display what you gather. It's a visual reminder to go outside and touch the earth each day. Adorning a nature table and rotating its display through the seasons helps keep your grounding practice on track. Each week, replace older items with fresh ones you find.

In summer, it's so easy to fill your home with beautiful treats from the earth—from picking flowers or veggies from your own garden (for more on grounded gardening, see chapter 7, on spring), to collecting beautiful seashells on a summer vacation, to a spontaneous wander at an outdoor farmers market or roadside stand. You get to spend time in nature and also enhance the natural beauty of your living space.

Healing Practices

The healing suggestions in this section are especially suited for summer. It's also vacation time, and I can think of no better summer vacation to plan for than a grounding vacation! Release all of the tension and stress from being cooped up during the colder months by planning a trip—whether for a weekend or a week—centered on connecting to the earth.

Health Tips for Summer

Grounding outdoors can mean more sun exposure, which gets a lot of negative press. But there is the medical proof that time spent in the sun actually lengthens your lifespan. It's important to be outside in the fresh air and sunshine, and now a major medical study backs that up.[28] Researchers extensively studied time spent in the sun and subsequent life expectancy, and they found that life expectancy lengthened with increased sun exposure. And the benefits accrued in direct correlation to the amount of sun exposure: more time in the sun = longer life span.

I do recommend avoiding peak sun hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), which impose the most UV radiation exposure. Instead, go outside in the early a.m. or later p.m. I love for my patients to get early morning sun exposure every single day. It's an easy, instant way to boost mood, cure insomnia, even boost your libido.[29]

Get into the habit of wearing a hat and sunglasses. Just donning a hat is a major step toward protecting your vulnerable scalp and ear, neck, and nose skin. And you can easily protect your eyes and decrease your future cataract risk by wearing UV-protective sunglasses daily. Lastly, you can protect routinely exposed skin (most important on the face, scalp, and forearms) with a nonnanosized, nonchemical-based sunscreen using minerals like zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide.

Our skin naturally makes vitamin D when exposed to the sun. It takes about ten minutes or longer (depending on your skin type) to get a significant boost. I believe this vitamin D–sun exposure link is one major reason that being outside boosted longevity in that study. Vitamin D does so much for our bodies—everything from decreasing diabetes risk,[30] to naturally boosting your mood,[31] to helping enhance weight loss, [32]and even boosting cancer recovery, leading to significantly better remission

and survival rates.33

Summer Activity 4: Grounding Summer Vacation

Materials: Varies depending on vacation location and length.

Method: This year I challenge you to choose a location centered around grounding. This is generally very easy, as grounding and vacationing go hand in hand! Ideas include:

- Rent an RV and explore a national park, barefoot if possible, or sitting down at resting spots and touching the ground, rocks, or trees with your hands as often as possible.
- Rent a cabin on a lake and spend time barefoot, fishing and swimming.
- Camp, to enjoy outdoor living, campfires, climbing and communing with trees (even just touching a tree at your campsite will ground you right through your fingertips), and more, all barefoot.
- Go to a winery that offers outdoor wine tastings so you can slip off your shoes as you sip.
- Plan a trip to a natural hot spring and take a dip.
- Plan a trip to a beautiful waterfall that you are allowed to play in, walk under, reach out and touch. Simply touching the wet rocks around a waterfall with your hand will ground you instantly.
- Go to a spa retreat that offers an in-ground mud bath or mineral baths, and spend plenty of time in the pool and/or hot tub; in-ground and concrete structures are grounded.
- Attend a retreat in a natural setting: tai chi, yoga, meditation, silent retreat, art, nature, or any other retreat will give you the chance to spend hours outdoors barefoot or touching the earth with your

hands.

- And of course, the classic summer vacation: heading to a beach for hours of barefoot grounding under the sun.

Centering Practices

Each Centering Practices section offers a guided healing meditation you can do while grounded. In summer, it's easy to do this outside. This meditation brings the radiant warmth of the summer sun right into your being.

Summer Activity 5: Summer Healing Meditation—Becoming the Sun

Materials: A place to lie down outside, on the earth. You can spread a towel or picnic blanket and simply slip a toe, heel, or fingertip over the edge of the blanket to touch the earth. Remember, it takes only one cell in your body to touch the earth and get grounded and your entire body is grounded. There is no need to lie completely on the earth unless you want to!

Method: Lie down comfortably and read through this meditation or listen to an audio recording at http: //www.newharbinger.com/44895.

> The next ten minutes are yours to connect with the earth and become the sun. Give yourself a few moments to visualize your body accepting the profound grace of this healing contact. Close your eyes and softly take several deep, slow breaths.
>
> Define an intention for this meditation, such as "To feel more at peace," "To decrease my pain," "To feel safer each day," "To enjoy more energy," or something else—whatever intention feels right for you, in this moment.
>
> Take several more slow, deep breaths, and when you feel

you have centered yourself in the moment, begin to visualize a bright warm light in the center of your chest, radiating from your heart. It's a little ball of sunshine, a healing, loving light.

Now, with each breath you take, visualize this flowing light pouring slowly throughout every aspect of your body, from the inside out, radiating in all directions.

With every in-breath, feel it increase in energy and intensity, getting brighter and brighter.

With every out-breath, feel your sun radiate further and further outward, enveloping your entire body in a beautifully healing light.

Your heart is the center of this healing sunshine. Growing and growing…providing a gentle, pleasant sensation of being totally covered, from the inside out, with healing, loving light.

Just allow this moment. With each in-breath, feel your heart energy expanding and filling the ball of sunshine with love. With each out-breath, feel the warmth radiate out from your body in all directions.

In your mind's eye, picture your self. Picture your entire body, bathed in healing light…perfect in every way, just as it is. The sun, centered inside of you, full of love.

Feel the gratitude you have for your body for carrying your soul through this life, allowing you all the experiences you have in this lifetime, faithfully supporting you as you live in each moment.

Now picture your loved ones: children and family members and friends in your life, all the people who are positive relationships in your life—all are smiling warmly at you, surrounding you.

Continue to breathe in this bright, loving light, and bring

each loved one forward in your mind's eye, one at a time. As you breathe out, send this loving light from your heart directly into theirs, filling them with this love. See the healing light filling their heart space until it surrounds them completely, just as it did with you, igniting their own inner sunshine in their hearts.

Feel how sharing your heart with them did not diminish your light—rather, it strengthened it the sunny glow around and through you—and it strengthened their heart glow as well.

Be in this moment as much as you can. Feel gratitude for everyone beneficial in your life, and allow their now-illuminated, glowing presences to encircle you. You are completely surrounded with a ring of glowing, loving suns, all smiling at you from the center of their hearts. This connection mutually strengthens the sunlight radiating from all of you until it is a blinding and pervasive healing light that fills you with pure, positive energy.

There is nowhere you can go today that is not bathed in this healing light. Anything you do today, anywhere you go, and any person you see will be holding an intention of loving health, healing, and joy for you today because you took the time to set this energetic dynamic in motion through this meditation. You are all one in your goal for health, healing, and joy.

This meditation is very simple to remember—just fill your heart space with a sunshine that is full of healing, loving light, enveloping you. Expand this light with every breath and send it out to every person you would like to include, forming a ring of sunlight around them too. It does not have to be every single person in your life; if it is just one other, that is wonderful and enough!

It could take as little as five minutes, or you might find a half hour has passed. This state of relaxed, open

attentiveness is the ultimate healing state. It is the state of having your entire brain resonate with Mother Earth while your entire body is physically conductively connected to her.

Creating Practices

In this section for each season, I offer ways to express your inner creativity while soaking in the support from the earth. In the summer, there are endless opportunities to get messy outdoors creating art. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Once a week, all summer long, tap into Mother Earth's creativity boost. Ground through bare feet as you sit at a picnic table, stand at an easel, lean against a tree, sit in the cool shade, and so on. Feel the deep centered creative life force of our planet rising up through your body and out through your expressive hands. Finger paint. Work with clay. Have no goal in mind. You don't have to save or display what you create. In fact, it can be as simple as doodling in sand and letting the tide wash it away, or coloring with sidewalk chalk and letting the rain take it away, or painting your body with mud and washing it off with a hose when you are done, or creating nature art: collecting found items in nature and arranging them in an eye-pleasing way. Think stacking pebbles, arranging leaves in a spiral, creating a sunburst out of twigs, making a big heart out of shells, and so on.

Thirty minutes spent grounded and expressing yourself through visual arts is thirty minutes of fresh, pure creative energy flowing through your body and infusing your cells. Think of it as a way to flush old energy out of your body and wash in new life-giving energy on a spiritual level! More than just nutrition, hydration, and oxygenation, this is a renewal of spirit.

Summer Activity 6: Paint with Watercolors

Materials: Watercolor paints, water, paintbrush, and paper; an outdoor picnic table to sit at might make this activity even easier, but sitting on the ground works too!

Method: Watercolors are wonderful paints to start with because all they take is a little bit of water to activate the paints, they wash off easily, and there is absolutely no pressure because you can't do it wrong—it's just a fun, open-ended, playful exploration of color. You don't have to paint any actual images, just get your paints wet and begin swirling different images on paper. Concentric circles and polka dots are always fun, and watercolors layer and blend really well.

You can set a healing intention while you paint to release any stuck emotional or physical energy within you onto the paper. Allow your intuition to select whatever colors you feel drawn to and let your energy flow from your heart center onto the paper. When done, you can release the energy you've expressed by letting it dry and then burning the artwork over a candle (dropping it into a sink or other fireproof container before the flame reaches your fingertips!) to let the energy release to the universe. Or you can frame it, use it as a placemat for your next meal, or fold the paper into a colorful bookmark.

Summer Activity 7: Arrange on Sun-Print Paper

Materials: Sun-print paper (which develops in direct sunlight) from a craft store, a bowl of water, an outdoor space with foliage, rocks, or other natural decorative items you can collect.

Method: Go outside, get barefoot, and start collecting interesting little natural found objects. Leaves, grasses, flower heads, rocks, sticks, shells…any items with texture or patterns work exceptionally well, like ferns and leaves with serrated edges. Arrange them on top of the sun paper in the shade, then move the paper out into the full sun as directed in the instructions. After the paper has processed in the sun, submerge the paper in water to set the image. That's it! I

have yet to see a sun print that wouldn't look amazing framed. You can even get sun-sensitive fabric and use these beautiful images to sew throw pillows for your sofa, make cloth napkins, placemats, quilts, and much, much more—even clothing! The gorgeous artwork you create can uplift your home all year long, reminding you to get outside and onto the earth every time you see it.

Summer Activity 8: Journal Vividly with Colored Pencils or Markers

Materials: Colored pencils, markers, a blank art journal or coloring pages

Method: Get grounded outside by sitting either on a picnic blanket with your bare feet over the edge, at a picnic table with your bare feet on the ground, or on concrete steps or a sidewalk, which is grounded to the earth beneath it. Doodle; write words, thoughts, phrases, or images that you are drawn to; or simply color in a printed coloring page. There are tons of gorgeous adult coloring books on the market now, as medical studies have shown that coloring can help significantly decrease anxiety[34] and is a readily available form of do-it-yourself art therapy!

This therapeutic coloring session is made even more healing by being grounded. Feel the energy of the earth rising up through your feet, filling your heart, body, mind, and soul with creative expression. What colors do you want to reach for? What words or images are popping into your head? What in you wants to release? What in you wants to express itself? Whether you are doodling, creating written words and coloring them in, going abstract, or even doing some functional journaling by writing stream-of-consciousness off the top of your head, recording a recent dream, making a bucket list, or sketching something you see, let creativity take over. This is more about taking a break

from the world and offering healing grounding energy to your body than it is about any result.

Summer Activity 9: Sculpt Some Environmental Art

Materials: Found objects outside.

Method: This is probably the most fun of all ways to get grounded and create art. All you do is use objects naturally found in the space you are in outdoors to create something visually appealing. I love creating some spontaneous nature art wherever I go—whether at a local park, friend's house, city sidewalk, even in a parking lot by a busy shopping area. If there are a few rocks, leaves, seeds, flower petals, shells, or the like, you can create art.

Arrange leaves in a heart shape, stack rocks in a beautiful tower, arrange flower petals in an expanding spiral, place twigs and sticks and shells and any other objects you find in any pattern that you feel drawn to create. Bring a smile to whoever walks by and sees it!

No matter what art you decide to try, consider going way outside of your artistic comfort zone. Get messy with paint, go wild with clay—creating outside means you can expand what you would normally consider doing indoors in a messier direction, with less worry about making a mess, and easy water cleanup. Bring some wet wipes, hose off if you are near a hose, create art near a body of water you can swim in afterward, or just leave the mess outside when you are done and hop in the shower.

Moving Practices

In this section for each season, I suggest some of my favorite ways to get you moving on our beautiful earth that will get your blood circulating and

give your conductive health a boost! In summer, swimming and other outdoor exercises, like summertime lawn games you can play with your friends and family (badminton, volleyball, croquet, lawn darts, cornhole, and more), all allow you to be barefoot.

Summer Activity 10: Work Out While Grounded

In summer it's easier to get physically active outdoors. Exercising while grounded can feel more vigorous, and recovering afterward can feel lighter. See if you can feel the difference. Try for at least one grounded exercise session a week; ideally, shoot for three. Water sports make this easy at the height of summer, but even when it gets too cool for paddleboarding, kayaking, or surfing, you can still do outdoor yoga, long walks, and tai chi at the park.

Summer Activity 11: Flow Through Outdoor Yoga

Materials: Yoga mat or towel (optional).

Method: You can use a towel or yoga mat and still be grounded. Just make sure you allow a fingertip, toe, or heel to flow over the edge of your mat and touch the earth directly. There are many poses that are particularly powerful energetically when done standing directly on the earth. My favorites include mountain pose, tree pose, warrior and reverse warrior, triangle pose, downward facing dog, pigeon pose, and child's pose.

Summer Activity 12: Direct Energy Through Outdoor Tai Chi

Materials: Bare feet and loose, comfortable clothing.

Method: Tai chi is an ancient practice of running energy through the body using specific, intentional body movements. You can add the healing energy of grounding by connecting your body to the earth. In fact, in many parks worldwide you can see weekly clubs meeting up to do tai chi outdoors barefoot. I suggest starting with a fifteen-minute tai chi practice. If you don't have a local group to join, check YouTube for guided routines to do on your own. You can either commit the sequence to memory or download an app to your smartphone that will guide you through an outdoor session.

Summer Activity 13: Walk with Mindfulness While Barefoot

Materials: Bare feet and a safe outdoor space to walk.

Method: Mindful walking is simply a meditative experience of slow and careful, mindful steps with each in-breath and each out-breath, clearing the mind and staying focused on the sensation of connection beneath your feet. As the Vietnamese monk Thích Nhât Hanh would say, "Kiss the ground with each step," infusing it with gratitude and love. As we talked about in previous chapters, with each step you take grounded to the earth, the earth relaxes your muscles, decreases muscle fatigue, and boosts muscle recovery, making you less sore the next day. Simply walk mindfully and barefoot for twenty minutes and see what immediate and long-term benefits you notice.

If your favorite form of movement keeps you up and off of the earth, like an arduous hike that requires supportive hiking shoes or biking that has you up on wheels, then simply ground for ten minutes before, ten minutes in a break in the middle, and ten minutes cooling down afterward. You don't even have to take off your shoes! Sitting on a big boulder will ground you, and so will simply touching a leaf on a tree.

Touching a tree while you stand in its shade is a welcome rest stop in which to drink some water, rehydrate, and then finish your workout.

Summer Activity 14: Pick Crops—and Eat Them Too

Materials: A U-pick farm near you.

Methods: Spend a half hour picking seasonal crops. Summertime is best for berries (blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries), cucumbers, tomatoes, corn, green beans, and sunflowers.

I love heading to local farms to pick fruits, veggies, and flowers right from the land. It's definitely fun for the whole family, or take your significant other and make it a romantic date, later cooking whatever foods you pick together. Take your kids and make it a playdate with their friends in tow, or take your best friend and grab a drink together afterward. The best part is, you can't help but be grounded at least part-time while picking crops. Even if you don't slip off your shoes while you are outside, every single time you take hold of a fruit or veggie growing on a vine or bush or tree, you are grounded. All the seconds of grounded crop picking add up, as the human body responds instantaneously!

Make sure that in addition to enjoying the time you spend outside picking summer crops, you also head home inspired to eat what you picked! Blackberry cobbler, fresh cucumber sandwiches, homemade tomato sauce, grilled corn on the cob, garlic butter green beans—there are endless dishes you can create with foods you pick with your own two hands. Bon appétit!

Expanding Practices

This section offers you ways to expand and connect on a more spiritual level. In the summer, it can get so hot in the afternoons that a more comfortable outdoor activity is watching the morning sunrise to welcome each blessed day. I enjoy heart-spotting to feel the universe speak to me through nature (see Summer Activity 16), and bubble-blowing to spend peaceful time in prayerful communion (see Summer Activity 17).

Summer Activity 15: Grounding in Early Morning Sunshine

Materials: A gently rousing alarm clock, if you need help rising with the sun.

Method: Check what time sunrise is predicted for the next day and set your alarm for that time. Rise with the sun, drink a big glass of water, and head outside for ten minutes of greeting the world as the sun lights up the day. Try to get into a habit of waking up and grounding with the sun as often as possible, year round.

You can support your natural healthy energy rhythm by combining morning light on your face with grounding. Giving your body the clear signal that it is daytime is absolutely crucial to feel your best. Medical studies have shown that light on your face can be even more effective than a prescription anti-depressant in treating depression.35 This one daily practice could very well transform your entire life. Morning light decreases muscle pain associated with fibromyalgia,36 treats insomnia,37 and much more. Even one minute is beneficial—just get out there and do it all week long and see how your body responds. Your mood. Your energy. Your sleep. Even your sex drive!38 Try to allow this gentle routine to become a lifelong habit, to help you feel your very best for a lifetime.

Summer Activity 16: Go Heart-Spotting in

Nature

Materials: Bare feet and a camera (optional).

Method: Each season, go on a grounded heart-spotting expedition and take notes or pictures of what you find. Each season will reveal new gems to you; summer's growth and bloom offer heart-shaped leaves and flowers, and vacation time brings us chances to find seashells and (my favorite) river stones. Give yourself a good thirty minutes for heart-spotting (grounded, of course!) and see what treasures you can find. Take pictures and get a collection going. I've found heart-shaped knots in tree trunks, heart-shaped clouds, heart-shaped wads of gum stuck onto sidewalks, heart-shaped scrolls in iron garden gates, and many other surprising delights.

Summer Activity 17: Send Intentions by Blowing Bubbles

Blowing bubbles is a wonderful way to send an intention into the sky without harming the environment (the way releasing helium balloons can). Setting an intention to each bubble as it releases to the world and pops, carrying your wishes and releasing them to a higher power, can feel very freeing, lifting worry and stress right off of your shoulders.

Materials: Store-bought bubbles and wand, or this homemade bubble solution:

- 1/2 cup dish detergent
- 5 cups soft water or distilled water
- 2 tablespoons vegetable glycerin, light corn syrup, or honey (note, corn syrup or honey can attract bees and wasps)

Mix together and let sit overnight before use. For a

homemade wand, a wire coat hanger bent into a circle works great.

Method: Go outside barefoot with your bubble solution and wand, then get grounded. Set an intention for each set of bubbles you blow, releasing any worries or fears weighing on you, and know that on the out-breath these prayers are being expanded out through the universe and will be responded to in a way that is for your highest good. Here are some ideas for what to release with each bubble.

- (Breathing in): I ask spirit for the strength to [goal or desire] or to help me with [worry or fear].
- (Breathing out): I watch these bubbles carry my desires into the atmosphere and release into the universe.

or

- (Breathing in): I ask [god, spirit, universe] to help fortify my health with [your particular health issue.]
- (Breathing out): I know that my request is heard and received and will be honored in divine timing.

As you dip a wand into the solution, you can state your intentions and prayers out loud and then say “And so it is” or “Amen” or “It is done” or “All is well” as you move the wand through the air and make the bubbles.

Celebrating Practices

Summer offers plenty to celebrate with Mother Earth—particularly on the solstice. In this section, I offer some ideas on how to take the party outdoors and throw a seasonal grounding shindig. Let’s get planning…

Summer Activity 18: Grounding Summer

Solstice Party

Summer solstice (also called Litha) is a wonderful nature celebration that gives thanks to the longest day of the year. I offer many ideas for a long, celebratory day; choose a few, or one favorite. Do any combination, or all in a long wonderful flow; alone in reverence to Mother Nature, or with all of your loved ones. The point is to feel good, celebrate, and connect with the earth while being grounded and in a healing state.

An example summer solstice party day:

- Wake up with the sun and greet its rise outside, barefoot. Set an intention for the day's celebration and give gratitude for the sun's life-supportive properties.
- Visit your favorite natural body of water this morning, then have a picnic lunch grounded on the earth.
- In the afternoon, host a solstice party. The only rule is: everyone must be barefoot! Serve sun tea: place your favorite dried tea leaves in a pitcher of water, say a prayer of gratitude and infuse the water with a healing intention, and let it brew directly in the sunshine when the party starts. When it reaches the desired strength, pour into cups of ice.
- For party games, turn on the sprinkler and have wet and wonderful barefoot yard fun—play catch, tag, hide and seek, lawn darts, horseshoes, volleyball, and more—all under sprinkling water, which heightens conductivity and healing.
- For body painting, offer some washable paints, washable markers, face paints, or even temporary tattoos for guests to adorn their body with bright sunny colors. This season is the best for playful body art: not only is there typically more skin exposed, but the paint can wash off while guests run through the sprinkler or play with a hose—or provide a bucket of water and some sponges.

- For party favors, create beautiful flower crowns or garlands with wildflowers or garden flowers. Another wonderful way to decorate and celebrate is with kites, pinwheels, and ribbon dancers (long beautiful ribbons swirling as you run and twirl them in the air)—all much more eco-friendly than balloons!
- Chalk station: Offer lots of chalk and encourage everyone to write, doodle, and draw party decorations on sidewalks, patios, and rocks in the area. On the summer solstice, tracing each other's shadows on the sidewalk or driveway at different times throughout the party makes for some beautiful and creative fun as the shadows shift.
- Sun art station: Lay out sun-print paper and let your guests create beautiful arrangements of nature objects that the sun can turn into artwork they can take home. In their home, these will be a welcome reminder of the power of the sun, which always returns, even when we head deep into the upcoming winter darkness.
- Bubble station: Have a large bucket of homemade bubble solution and multiple coat hanger wands out (easier yet, offer several small bubble containers with built-in wands) and let bubbles fill the air. Best party atmosphere ever!
- Bonfire: End the party with a bonfire at sunset—a phenomenal way to extend the glow as long as possible on this longest day. With a fire pit as your centerpiece, include drumming, dancing, and singing—all barefoot, of course! Invite guests to bring an instrument, or simply create a bonfire playlist beforehand and blast tunes while you serve up s'mores.

Weekly Routines

In this final section of each chapter, I suggest a weekly routine for you to

consider adopting to make grounding a daily healing practice. Having an outline of healing grounding time to look forward to each day not only keeps your conductive health practice on track but also helps your entire week unfold more smoothly as you enjoy better energy, deeper sleep, and a greater internal sense of balance and calm than you'd have if you'd spent the entire week ungrounded. With lots of options, it will never get boring! Here's a sample routine:

Sunday: Start with a thirty-minute grounded nature walk, collecting seasonal treasures to adorn your home.

Monday: Spend thirty minutes of grounding on a shady sidewalk at lunchtime.

Tuesday: Include thirty minutes of moving meditation on a run or seated evening meditation on the grass.

Wednesday: Spend thirty grounded minutes exercising: yoga, stretches, or a nice after-dinner walk.

Thursday: Enjoy a picnic-style dinner grounded outside.

Friday: Wake up and greet the sun with a ten-minute grounding session.

Saturday: Wrap up the week by playing at your favorite local body of water all afternoon!

Add a few grounding holiday celebrations throughout the season, and you are well set to heal and finish the summer season feeling better than at the start.

Next up? The lovely cooler air and beautiful color displays that nature brings us in fall. It's so easy to keep up your thirty-minute daily grounding practice and segue into autumn. I'll tell you how in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5:

Autumn Displays and Gathering Your Bountiful Harvest

When my daughter was a preteen, I wanted to have a special activity that we did together, just mother and daughter. So at each month's full moon, while the rest of the house slept, late at night I would wake her up and make cups of hot tea. Then, with blankets wrapped tightly around our shoulders, we would go outside to stand under the full moon barefoot in our pajamas.

It was so glorious, so special. For an entire year, through every season, we stood under the light of each full moon and grounded together. In those moments, I felt a deep connection to our planet, our moon, our entire universe, my daughter, the sleeping world around me and everyone in it, our ancestors who went before us and keep watch from the heavens, and especially to God.

It was physically, spiritually, and emotionally grounding. It was downright magical. I couldn't believe how the full moon changed so much over the course of the year. Unless you've committed to this practice for an entire year, it's easy to think that all full moons are basically the same—but they aren't. Some were so brilliantly white it was almost as light as day. Some moons had beautiful tinges of color—yellowish, orangish, or reddish. Some full moons look so far away in the sky; some seem close enough to reach out and touch.

Some seasons were so warm and freeing that we cast off our blankets and just danced. Some seasons were so bright we could see our shadows on the ground. Some seasons were so cold that we huddled together under several layers of blankets with mugs of hot chocolate. Still, even if we could stand it for only a few minutes, we honored the moon by bathing our

faces in the light source of the night sky as we grounded.

Doing this cemented our relationship with an incredible strength that helped us face traumatic experiences that unbeknownst to us were just around the corner. The following year, our family was torn apart, yet our grounded connection on a soul level allowed us to persevere. Surviving became thriving as we retained our deeply strengthened core. Consider going out to ground under the full moon every month for a year—starting with the next one.

Surrender to the Enticements of Autumn

During the fall, winter's freezing temperatures haven't set in permanently and summer's oppressive heat has eased. Nature is begging us to come outside to ground, more than in any other season. She entices with displays of breathtaking colors in the trees, fewer biting bugs, less discomfort as cool breezes ruffle your hair and encourage you to throw on a sweater. It is still comfortable enough to reach out with a bare foot or a bare hand each day to connect with the earth's healing.

Nurturing Practices

In this section, I offer healthy activities that nurture your body particularly well during autumn. Nurture your innate health through grounding by finding a patch of concrete to ground on, going on weekly nature walks, and getting into a monthly full moon viewing practice.

Autumn Activity 1: Ground Through Concrete

Materials: Sidewalk, driveway, garage, concrete patio, concrete steps, basement, or any other area of concrete set directly on the earth; paper and pencil (optional).

Method: Map out all the areas of concrete around your living space that you feel comfortable walking barefoot on. Just step out your front door, or out of your work space, kick off

your shoes so you're barefoot, grab a paper and pencil (kids love creating maps, so involve yours if you have 'em) and draw a simple outline of your building or home in the center of the paper.

From there, as you walk each direction, map out the walkways, driveways, and sidewalks that are concrete. As you walk, feel the warm concrete beneath your feet and see the condition of these walkways. Clearing off any litter or sharp objects, make sure these paths are safe for bare toes, and jot down your path on the map. Spend five minutes sketching out your grounding path so that for those days when you simply can't get dirty and need to stay on the sidewalk, or rain has made puddles that have turned into mud and you have no time for cleanup, this will be your easy grounding backup plan. Spend ten minutes or more contacting the concrete beneath you, either through bare feet, by sitting down on it, or by touching the surface with your hands. Any body part works.

Because concrete is a semiconductor, grounded concrete is just waiting for you outside, fully loaded with healing energy. Grounding through concrete offers several advantages over grounding through the grassy or muddy earth. First, it allows you to do many quick grounding sessions as often as you like throughout the day and night, as it is cleaner—just slip off a shoe and put a bare foot on it, then slip back into your shoe and go about your day. Unlike with sand and mud, there's no washing up afterward. And because almost every type of human community has concrete, you don't need to search out parks, yards, or beaches. Finally, its surface is highly visible, so you can see what you are stepping on—helpful for hesitant or novice grounders. You can more confidently avoid the anthills, snakes, ticks, or bees that might deter you from grounding in grassy and wooded areas.

Autumn Activity 2: Skygaze at Night

Materials: Nighttime, the moon, the stars, and a blanket for warmth (optional).

Method: Commit to grounding under the moon all year long to watch the different phases and notice the subtle differences of the nighttime sky. You can bundle up as much as you like; just slip one body part out of a slipper or glove to touch the earth in some way. Look up at the moon and take three deep, slow, long breaths of our beautiful atmospheric oxygen. Grounded here on planet Earth, visualize how it would feel to be over 238,000 miles away, unable to breathe this air or touch this ground. Looking at the beautiful earth from the moon, you would have a desperate desire to return, to spread out on the earth's surface and feel as held and supported as you do right now. Give thanks that you don't have to be separated from her to feel a deep internal longing to connect with our planet. Soak up ten minutes or more during each night of grounded skygazing.

Only twelve human beings have ever walked on the face of that moon you see each night. As I was filming the grounding documentaries *The Grounded* and *Heal for Free,* I had the honor of meeting both the late *Apollo 14* astronaut Dr. Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon, and *Apollo 16* astronaut Charlie Duke, the tenth man to walk on the moon. Walking on a Florida beach for our interviews, all of us barefoot in the warm, wet sand, was definitely a highlight in my life.

Mitchell spoke about his famous moment of being in space and looking around at the universe, feeling this overwhelming sense of unity and oneness with everything—not just the earth but even the stars and the space in between. Upon returning home, he used this inspiration to create the Institute of Noetic Sciences to research the link between the earth, the moon, medical science, philosophy, and spirituality.

Duke was one of the key scientists and astronauts of the entire lunar mission program. From being CapCom on *Apollo 11* (the very first lunar

landing) through backup astronaut for *Apollo 13*, lunar module pilot for *Apollo 16*, and backup astronaut for *Apollo 17* (the final journey to the moon), Charles Duke is the epitome of a warm heart mixed with the passion, intelligence, and bravery required to pioneer space exploration. He talked a lot about how he found a much deeper faith after reaching the moon and landing back solidly on Earth, and I could feel and see a glow around him as he talked.

What I came away with from each interview was a clear understanding: the desire to be connected to the earth runs very deeply in our bodies. Those astronauts felt an appreciation, a deep emotion, and a feeling of love for our planet as it stood out as the only color against the dark backdrop of space. The earth's entire purpose—to vibrantly support life—became crystal clear as they felt a deep immutable longing to return to the planet they called home. From this perspective, it makes total sense that we desire a deep relationship with our earth that can be exquisitely, even painfully, felt when we are disconnected. So ground on the earth and look up into the vastness of the cosmos with gratitude.

Autumn Activity 3: Go on a Nature Hunt

Materials: Bare feet, the abundance of nature's gifts, and a table indoors.

Method: Walk around barefoot outdoors, with mind and heart open, looking for small treasures in nature to appreciate. Place them in a small area of your home to update weekly. Bringing nature into your living space reminds you to get back outside and ground. Fall collections might include leaves, acorns, rocks, pinecones, sticks, twigs, dried flowers, and seedpods.

In the fall, it's so easy to fill your home with beautiful treats from the earth—collecting colorful fall leaves, acorns, and pinecones; making a spontaneous stop at an outdoor pumpkin patch or apple orchard; meandering through a romantic vineyard. And your nature-inspired collection will give you that nudge to go outside and ground yourself today.

Healing Practices

The grounding activities that follow are wonderfully suited for autumn. Temperatures are no longer hot, insects are less active, and nature is transformed with vivid color. Fall camping offers long hikes through beautiful foliage, warming campfires, and overnights under the stars. Soak it all in before the more cooped-up months of winter are upon us.

Autumn Activity 4: Set Up an Overnight Camp

Materials: You can be as elaborate or simple as you like, but you will generally need a tent, sleeping bag, supportive camping pad, and provisions for food and water.

Method: Camping grounded is so pleasant in the fall, when daytime warmth and nighttime coolness offer the most comfortable experience. After eating dinner and telling stories at the campsite while grounded all evening, drink in the beautiful starry sky overhead grounded too, and you will be sure to sleep well. This does not have to be fancy—sleeping in a backyard with just a few blankets is as fun, and infinitely easier! Here are some ideas for grounding while soaking in nature, whether sleeping in your backyard, camping at a full-service site in one of our nation's beautiful parks, or trekking on a multiday hike. Read through, pick one or two that sound doable and fun, and intentionally work them into your camping retreat!

Set up camp grounded: When you first pick your campsite location, walk around carefully clearing the area of any debris, sharp rocks, or litter, taking note of any ant hills or other hazards to avoid. Then kick off your shoes and go barefoot whenever you are at this home base. You can spend hours here, grounding and supporting your body's conductive health much more intimately than you usually can do at home. Soak in the grounding energy as you pitch your tent, set up your campfire, fluff out your sleeping bag,

sit down and drink some water, and take in the sights around you.

Ground in water: If there is a water feature where you are camping—a lake for some fishing or kayaking, a beach or river to walk along—make sure to remove your shoes for part or all of this time in the water. Touching the water surface (for example, trailing your hand from a canoe or kayak) grounds you right through your fingertips just as well as if you were fully immersed.

Horseback riding: If you are planning an adventure such as horseback riding, know that every moment that your animal is walking on the earth outside, they are grounded (even with metal horseshoes), and when you touch them, you are grounded too! Before you set off and whenever you are safely stopped, petting your horse grounds you while the two of you bond!

Ground with pets: If you bring your dog with you on your camping trip, you can get grounded at any time, anywhere. When you're wearing hiking shoes, stop often to pet your dog, as its paws on the earth make it fully grounded.

Ground around the campfire: Slip off your shoes or simply touch your hands to the exposed earth as you sit by the campfire cooking, making s'mores, telling stories, playing cards, or stargazing.

Birdwatching grounded: If you enjoy settling into nature and looking for birds, be sure to find a vantage spot that grounds you so it becomes a healing session too! You can slip off your shoes or touch a rooted, living tree. Its twigs and leaves are as grounded as the earth itself. Enjoy the shade of a tree or touch the leaves of a concealing bush or shrub.

Tree climbing: When you climb a tree and sit on a sturdy branch, you will be powerfully grounded. Any parts not covered with a thick layer of bark (which insulates the live,

grounded force inside the tree) will ground you, so touching the foliage and blossoms of a tree is best. If you have kids who love to climb trees, know that they are wonderfully grounding the entire time. When you first arrive at your campsite, pick out your grounding tree and relate to it often throughout your camping trip.

Rock grounding: If you can, choose a campsite with large rock features. And many hiking trails offer a chance for rock scrambling. Rocks, similar to concrete, are semiconductive, so you can mindfully incorporate grounding through rocks. Sit on a boulder; lie on a rock slope and rest your bare feet on it, or gather rocks as a grounding centerpiece at your site (as long as its allowed by the campground or park). As you hike, intentionally stop at rocky spots for a water break.

Grounding fire ceremony: Having a fire at a campsite is a primal camping experience (though it must be done safely, following any restrictions). As you gaze into a blazing fire, you can combine the healing touch of grounding with a release of all that no longer serves you. You'll need a marker for this one.

- Collect a few beautiful, colorful autumn leaves that speak to you and then settle by the fire with your marker.
- Connect to the earth by grounding yourself, either by going barefoot or touching the earth with your hand or other part of your body. Sit quietly for a while, thinking of things in your life you no longer want or need.
- On each leaf, write a word or two that represents the energy or emotion or situation you would like to release.
- Drop each leaf into the fire to be transformed from a physical object with a physical word on it to light and smoke, your sweetly released intention carried into the atmosphere and the universe above and around you.

- Sit as long as you like, knowing that the fire has transmuted your request from something tangible into pure positive energy.
- Feel your burdens lifted, breathe deeply, and see the beauty of the fire, of the earth around you, of the night sky above you, all embracing you as you sit centered and firmly supported by this healing planet beneath you. All is well.

Taking down camp: You set up your campsite grounded; now be sure to ground as you take down your campsite and pack to return home. Let your bare feet connect you to the earth as you pack up your sleeping bag, tent, provisions, and any trash, and complete any other remaining tasks. Before slipping your shoes back on and heading out, take a few moments to say a blessing for the time you spent on this spot of the earth. Take three deep breaths of gratitude, filling up your body with fortitude that you can take back home with you, and say a prayer or set an intention of protection and peace over this campsite for whoever comes next.

Centering Practices

This section offers a guided healing meditation you can do while grounded outside. For autumn, the meditation brings the strength and perseverance of a mighty, rooted tree into your being. Try it when you want to shore up your internal strength and release old energy dynamics that no longer serve you. It's also great to do during times of transition or when outcomes feel shaky, scary, or unknown.

Autumn Activity 5: Meditation on Becoming a Rooted Tree

This meditation brings internal peace even when the external is unpredictable. Trees are majestic because they are not

afraid to hold space both above the earth and deep within it. With expanding branches above and expanding roots below, trees don't play small or shrink—they grow. This growth makes them resilient despite ever-changing conditions, which makes this meditation resonate with the transition of fall. With this meditation, you feel the security and comfort that expansion can bring when you anchor yourself deeply both above (spiritually) and below (physically grounding to the earth).

Materials: I find this meditation more powerful when done sitting, but you can lie down or stand. Do whatever feels right. You can sit or lie on a towel or a picnic blanket and touch the earth with a toe, heel, or fingertip.

Method: Grounded in your chosen position, read through the meditation (or listen to it at http: //www.newharbinger.com/44895). Once you have read through it or listened a few times, you can guide yourself on your own any time.

> Settle into your chosen position on the earth. Take a few moments to visualize your body accepting the profound grace of this healing contact. Close your eyes softly, taking several deep, slow breaths.
>
> Define an intention that feels right for you, such as "To embrace change," "To release my resistance to [identify something you have been struggling with]," or "To trust in the unfolding future."
>
> Take several more slow, deep breaths, and when you feel centered in the moment, begin to really feel the earth under your feet, under your seat, or if you are lying down, under your entire back and head as well. Start to trust in, sink into, and soak up this strong support.
>
> Now, with each breath you take, visualize your body responding to this firm support from the earth by growing roots into it. First, small shoots tentatively send out curling

and unwinding tendrils into the ground. As they are met with this beautifully healing rich earth, they grow dramatically longer and stronger, sending out additional anchors in all directions into the earth. With each breath, the roots of your body grow exponentially deeper and wider, anchoring you so firmly there is nothing that could happen above the earth that would move you from the firm support of the earth below. No wind strong enough to untether you. No rain strong enough to wash you away.

With every in-breath, feel your roots strengthen and expand into the ground. With every out-breath, feel your upper body begin to grow like a tree. Your torso is a strong trunk that supports more bountiful branches than you could have ever imagined. With every breath, just like with the roots, tentative shoots and branches grow strong and confident and feel expansive, exciting, renewed, reaching out into the atmosphere all around you, in every direction.

Growing and growing…anchored deeply in the earth below and using this unwavering strength and support to allow your branches to grow exponentially tall and expansive and strong into the sky. Keep creating in and out in this way until your tree is exactly what feels right for you in this moment. Feel how solid you are. Feel how the winds play with your leaves and dance your branches, but how unmoving your core is, how rooted and safe and firm your trunk remains. Even if the wind increases, and even as rain falls, your swaying branches just enjoy the wild weather and constant changes in conditions as your deepest roots remain blessedly firm, deep in the life-giving earth.

Feel the sun come out and warm your tree top, the beautiful canopy you have created on this planet. Feel the sun on your head, your crown, your arms, your branches, your fingertips. Feel how there is no limit to the strength you can soak in from the earth below and no limit to the reach you can extend above, as the sun and the moon and the stars and the rain and the birds and the butterflies all

support your presence here and are grateful that you exist.

Feel the air cool, and your leaves begin to change. Feel the excitement in your branches grow as the colors explode into a beautiful display. Feel the energy shift as the leaves prepare to let go. There is so much power in letting the leaves release. All the while you feel your inner strength grow more and more. Letting the leaves fall down beautifully all around you, some spiraling out in the wind and creating magnificent swirls in the sky. Without the need to focus on holding onto the leaves, you now have extra energy to send down to your roots. Autumn allows you to release the leaves that no longer serve you and to deepen and enrich your roots and your core.

You feel and know more deeply than ever before that all of the weather your branches can feel—sun, wind, rain, stormy night—it all serves you. And all of the leaves your branches can create and release and create and release over and over again, all serve you. Nothing takes away from the core being of who you are. No amount of wind uproots you. No amount of leaves that release diminishes you. In fact, as you release your fall foliage you feel an incredible inner sense of liberation. Of an internal lightening. Of an inner peace that you could never have while the leaves were fluttering, attached to you.

When the last leaf has finally fallen, take three deep gorgeous life-affirming breaths, each one drawing earth energy up through your roots and expanding throughout your trunk and branches. It feels so incredibly good to have an opportunity to reset yourself in this way. Enjoy the still and the quiet. Deep within, you already feel the stirring of new life that will be bursting forth this spring. Deep within, you know you have the potential to create anew all the leaves that have just fallen off and more, so much more. Many, many times over you can burst into new life after taking a centering pause. So enjoy the pause while you are lucky enough to get one. Just allow this moment and

breathe for as long as you need to.

Change and letting go liberate you to move forward into newness and growth. There is no end. There is no limit. There is nothing but endless possibility coursing through you, and grounded energy supporting every moment of it. Open to what may be currently happening in your life. Allow your body to release what no longer serves, and feel liberated by that. Take the time to center your core in a deeply grounded way, connected to the earth. When it is time to open your eyes and resume your day, keep that internal feeling of strength and centeredness with you. And allow the grounding energy you took the time to soak in during this meditation to power you through whatever you face today. Return to it often.

Creating Practices

While soaking in the support from the earth, express your inner creativity. Autumn provides ample natural art supplies. Leaves and acorns are my favorites; pinecones and helicopter seeds from maples and sycamores are also fun!

Autumn leaves are so easy to work it's just a no-brainer. You can make the vibrant colors last longer in a few easy ways:

- Soak them in a diluted glycerin solution for several days before using them in crafts (most drugstores carry glycerin).
- Iron them in two sheets of wax paper.
- Perhaps simplest, laminate the leaves by pressing them between two sheets of clear contact paper.

I don't preserve my leaves before using them—I love to watch the colors change over the fall months and then when the season is over toss them, au naturel into my compost heap. Either way, leaf art is where it's at in the fall.

Autumn Activity 6: Gather a Leaf Wind "Chime"

Materials: Colorful fallen leaves, a small branch, string or yarn, scissors.

Method: You can make a beautiful leaf chime that flutters in the air as you walk past by sewing or tying leaves onto string or yarn, then securing several strands of these leaf strings along a branch to hang. First, go outside (barefoot of course) to collect a selection of your favorite leaves. Bring scissors and string, and find a comfortable spot to sit on the ground (or at a picnic table, with your bare feet on the earth underneath the table) and start stringing! You can tie the leaves on at their stems or use a large quilting needle to string leaves in a row. Create several lengths of leaves on hanging strings and tie them in a row along the branch so they hang freely. This also looks beautiful when the leaf strands are tied to hang from a horizontally suspended circle like an embroidery hoop. Feel free to also tie store-bought feathers or other lightweight found nature objects on these leaf wind chimes as well; you can't get it wrong, and everything ends up being beautiful, but my favorite is ending each leaf strand with a different feather. The feather adds not only beauty but also more movement to the hanging strands as the air stirs.

Autumn Activity 7: Decorate with Acorns

Materials: Collected fallen acorns, Mod Podge, a small foam or bristle paintbrush, glitter in your favorite colors (gold glitter looks amazing in the fall!), paper plate or newspaper, small glass jar (save from your recycling bin).

Methods: A simple bowl of acorns is so beautiful in the fall, and you can take your acorns up a notch with glitter! Have fun outside collecting a nice handful or more of fallen

acorns—you may want to keep your shoes on while you collect under oak trees, as acorns can be quite sharp when stepped on. If you are lucky enough to find some with the caps still on, that gives you something to hold onto as you apply the glitter. Once you have all of the acorns you want to work with, find a nice spot to sit on the earth, at a picnic table, or in your own backyard, with your bare feet resting on the earth. Brush a thin layer of Mod Podge over the acorn, then dip it into the glitter or sprinkle it all over the acorn, with a paper plate or newspaper to catch the extra glitter so you can reuse it. Line up your acorns to dry, then spend a few moments just enjoying the fall air. In fact, this would be a great time to spend ten minutes doing the fall tree meditation described in this chapter! Afterward, put your glitter acorns in a small glass jar and place on a windowsill, or arrange them around a short candle in a shallow bowl for a nice centerpiece to enjoy while you eat. They are so beautiful you will want some in every room.

Autumn Activity 8: Offer Pinecone Bird Feeders

Materials: Peanut butter (if allergic to peanuts, try sunflower seed butter or any other substitute of your choice), fallen pine cones, birdseed, yarn or string.

Methods: This is a wonderful craft to involve kids in. Spend some time outdoors collecting pinecones (more open pinecones will hold more birdseed) and then set up a little space on the ground or at a picnic table to create bird feeders. First, tie string or yarn around the top of the pinecone securely, leaving enough length of the string to hang it from a tree branch when you are finished. Second, use your fingers or a knife (I honestly find fingers so much easier) to load peanut butter into your pinecone on all sides, getting it deep into the groves between the scales. Then roll

the pinecones in a bowl of birdseed and again, use your fingers to really load up all the spaces with as much birdseed as possible. When you are happy with your bird feeders, hang them up outside in the branches of a nearby tree (if you have a tree outside a window you can see from at home or at work, hang where you can see birds enjoying the fruits of your labor) and see what kinds of birds arrive to feast.

Moving Practices

Autumn opportunities to get your blood circulating and boost your conductive health include wandering the farmers markets, pumpkin patches, and apple orchards (picking apples is a workout!). And if your grounding time is limited, play a quick barefoot game on sidewalks and concrete patios.

Autumn Activity 9: Pick and Choose at a Pumpkin Patch

Watch for your local pumpkin patches to open. I highly recommend a weekly stop throughout all of the pumpkin season, not just the days before Halloween. Pumpkins of all sizes, shapes, and colors make beautiful natural decorations to bring nature to your home: large pumpkins on your front doorstep, mini pumpkins on a table, midsized pumpkins around a fireplace, and of course, while you are there, grab a pie pumpkin for making pies, muffins, pancakes, waffles, and pumpkin bread! If you are careful, you can walk barefoot through a pick-your-own pumpkin patch; if you simply want to hang out after selecting your pumpkin, there are usually picnic tables and green spaces for lounging on the earth. On a farm, no one judges you even if you flop down and take a nap in the grass!

Autumn Activity 10: Harvest at an Apple Orchard

As with summer berry picking, grounding through your hands while picking fruit is every bit as powerful as grounding through your feet. So for an easy way to ground without going barefoot, hold onto a tree branch or touch a tree trunk while you are picking apples at a nearby apple orchard. And of course, for a grounding boost, you can kick off your shoes and enjoy your feet on the earth while you sip hot apple cider!

Autumn Activity 11: Play Sidewalk Games

I've mentioned the advantages to grounding through concrete: you can simply kick off your shoes, then slip them back on—no dirt, no grass, no mess. If you have ten minutes to be barefoot outside but not enough time to clean up muddy, sandy, or grass-stained feet, a sidewalk game, on your own or with others, is just the ticket. There are many options, and most require only a piece of chalk; some don't even need that! Here are a few of my favorites to get you started.

- Hopscotch: This is a great solo game limited only by your imagination. Draw a classic ten-box hopscotch pattern or create your own variation of single and double boxes in a lineup. Toss a marker (a small rock or piece of bark) onto the first box and hop on one foot (in a single box) or two feet (in a double box), taking care to skip the box that your marker occupies. Turn around by hopping on one foot at the end and come back down through the pattern, stopping on one foot to lean over and pick up your marker on the way out. Toss your marker into the second box and repeat. See if you can do all ten boxes—you will have gotten a workout

without even trying! Jumping, coordination, leaning over, balance, accuracy with throwing—it's all good for your body, and doing it barefoot the entire time means you just got a grounded workout in. Go you!

- Tic-Tac-Toe: Play this classic game to with a friend, sitting on the sidewalk and soaking up grounded energy through your hands, legs, and feet. Draw a nine-box grid and take turns filling the spaces, one player with X's, other with O's, until one of you gets three in a row either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. If no one gets three in a row by the time the grid is full, you tie. Play again! That just means bonus grounding time, so you actually won every minute you were playing.
- Hangman: In this classic sidewalk chalk game, one player thinks of a word or phrase and the other tries to guess it by selecting letters of the alphabet (if you've never played Hangman, think Wheel of Fortune). You have a limited number of tries to guess—for every letter you guess that is not in the word(s), your partner will draw one part of a stick man—a leg, a head, an arm, for example. If they draw the entire person before you guess the word or phrase, you lose! But again, if you are playing this game grounded, you still win.
- Dots and Boxes: I like this game because you can make your dot grid as large or as small as you like, thereby making the game short and sweet or nice and long. Draw a grid of dots, and players take turns connecting two dots with a line. The object is to be the last person to create a square out of four dots—if you create a full square, you get to put your initial in the box and go again. If you don't make a box, it is the other player's turn to connect two dots. At the end of the game, when the entire grid has been turned into boxes, whoever has the most initials in boxes wins! As with all the other games, be sure to play this barefoot or sit with some part of your body touching the sidewalk.

- Long jump: Here's a game you can play by yourself. Use a crack or a line in the sidewalk as your jumping point and take a casual jump. Mark where you landed with chalk. Have fun trying to jump farther each time and see how far you can go. You can practice standing jumps or running jumps or take several leaps in a row. Challenge your friends, or just get in your own private workout while grounding.
- Bull's-eye: On your own or with others, draw several bull's-eyes with chalk and choose point values for each circle. Think of the skeet ball you may have played at an arcade. Or make one huge bull's-eye of concentric circles with the highest points in the center. Take a small stone and give it a toss, trying to land it in the bull's-eye! Give yourself three tosses and add up your points. Beat your own previous record or play against a friend. If you can get the friend to play bull's-eye barefoot and grounded, secretly add ten points to your score. Heck, add twenty.
- Tracing each other's body outlines in silly positions: I think this one is soooo fun, but it does require a partner. Lie down on the sidewalk in a silly position—on your side, on your back, twisted, arms up, arms down, legs running, legs curled up—and ask your friend to trace around your outline with chalk. Do the same for your friend, then have fun drawing in clothing, facial expressions, hair, silly objects around you. Overlap outlines on top of each other for fun, or create a whole scene of people all along the sidewalk doing different things. With all the lying down and creative time spent sprawled over the sidewalk, you will be getting in more grounding than you ever expected.
- Tightrope: This is endlessly entertaining for kids, and let's face it, I still love to play it. Draw long, looping, waving lines up and down a sidewalk with chalk and see if your friends can follow it. You can draw dashes where you have to jump from point to point, spirals to

circle through, loops and zigzags, sharp turns and straightaways… there are no winners and losers, it's just fun to create and complete for each other or for yourself. Walk it barefoot, of course.

- Hot Lava: My children's favorite. Have everyone draw shapes that are "safe" zones to stand in, and everything else on the sidewalk becomes hot lava. You can create bridges and stepping stones, short jumps and long jumps, big areas where several people can fit together and small areas where only one person standing on one foot can fit. You can play this so many ways—have a contest to see who can get from end to end more quickly, use it as a simple obstacle course to see who can make it without touching lava, or even play it as a freeze dance type game: when the music stops, everyone freezes. If someone touches hot lava in order to land or balance when the music stops, they are out.

Expanding Practices

In the fall, sitting by a fire and using its transformational power to send your energy, intentions, and prayers out to the universe around you is a powerful spiritual practice, even better when grounded. Another wonderful way to feel the universe speak to you is through finding spirals in nature.

Autumn Activity 12: Release Through a Fire Pit Ceremony

Autumn is a time for letting go, releasing what is not serving us, and taking only the most nourishing aspects of our lives into the depths of winter. You can use fire to let go of a thought or situation that no longer serves you. By writing what you would like to release down on paper, and burning the paper in the flame, you allow its energy to transform into

smoke and return to the loving energy of the universe. This exercise can be powerful even if you simply enjoy the ceremony.

Materials: Paper, pen or pencil, outdoor fire.

Methods: Write down on the paper whatever you are ready to release. It can be anything—feelings, worries, or fears that are holding you back, anything you'd like to free your future up from, a situation you would like to release, an emotion you would like to set free—you can even write the name of a person you would like to forgive. Just write down whatever comes to you, or draw a picture. (When my kids were very little, they would just draw the cutest little pictures and have fun lighting those with a candle. No words needed.)

Carefully toss the paper onto the fire and watch as the paper burns and the light transforms your written words into heat, light, and smoke, carrying your intention out to the universe and knowing it is unconditionally received and released. You are releasing old or stuck energy back to the collective good of our planet. Know that there are people doing the same (maybe also reading this book!) all over the globe—sending their farewells, releasing what they are ready to let go of into the air, too—and I'm doing it too, right alongside you. All of our collective energies riding up on a wisp of smoke and disappearing into the fullness of what lies ahead.

Consider writing your hopes, dreams, and desires on another slip of paper, then watching the light transform them into heat and light. This time you are welcoming in all that you are open to, all that is in your highest good, that serves your soul purpose and brings peace, support, and centeredness to your life. Of course, be sure that you are taking the time to ground throughout this entire ceremony, with your feet on the earth or sitting directly on the ground. Feel the inspired energy of the earth urging you to free yourself from fear and worry, to let go and welcome in the

freedom, to allow transformation in your life, to drop all resistance to change and be open to what the future holds.

This powerful release ceremony should have you feeling lighter energetically, while the healing power of being grounded to the earth the entire time should have your body feeling deeply supported. Notice if you sleep better tonight after this time of deep, powerful release combined with healing support from the earth.

There is so much clarity and beauty in the natural unfolding of life on this planet that we can develop predictable mathematical calculations that reveal themselves over and over again. My favorite (although there are many!) is the Fibonacci sequence. This sequence is one of the most famous mathematical formulas of all time, and for good reason. It is reflected in nature in a multitude of ways, many of which we show in the grounding documentary *Heal for Free*.[39]

You don't have to like numbers to appreciate this formula, a series of numbers created by adding the sum of the two preceding numbers. So the sequence starts out:

0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144…

When we divide each number by the number before it, over time this ratio becomes a stable number, 1.618034, termed the Golden Ratio. By stacking squares of the expanding sizes of this sequence next to each other, you get squares with sides as long as the sum of the two numbers preceding it. Depicting this visually, a spiral unfolds. The spiral is expanding by a 1.618034 radius with every quarter turn: the Golden Ratio.

You can see this spiraling pattern showing up everywhere in nature. Think of seashells, snail shells, seed pods, pinecones, and the central floret disks of Asteraceae family flowers like sunflowers, daisies, and marigolds. Leaves follow the same pattern as well as they rotate around a center stem. About 90 percent of plants are estimated to grow their pattern of leaves in a Fibonacci pattern. Vines grow in spirals, sending out spiral-shaped tendrils to anchor them as they reach and expand. The best-known are cucumber, squash, melon, pea, and grape vines. Broccoli and cauliflower

florets, apples, bananas, and many more types of vegetation all grow in a Fibonacci pattern.

Even you. Yes, your very face, the distance between your eyes, your mouth and your nose all make a Golden Ratio. The pattern of your ear is a Golden Ratio. Inside your ear, the very mechanism you use to hear (your cochlea) is a Golden Ratio spiral. Even the womb in which we are held safely while we grow before birth, the uterus, has a 1.6 length-to-width ratio. The way your hand curls, the motion of your fingers,40 the way that your blood vessels branch in your heart, all follow a Fibonacci pattern,41 and the cardiac cycle of the human heartbeat itself reveals the Golden Ratio.42

Go all the way down into the cellular makeup of your body and you will find that your DNA double helix design is a Golden Ratio spiral, so even the very template of life—the human genome—contains the Fibonacci sequence.43 Expand outward and you'll find that the Fibonacci sequence in nature abounds globally, in hurricane patterns and even in the spiral galaxies (including our own Milky Way). All this is to say: Every time you see a spiral in nature, in art, in architecture, you can use it as a moment to feel a sense of connection with the earth's elegance.

Autumn Activity 13: Fibonacci Sequence and the Golden Ratio

Materials: Bare feet, natural setting to walk in.

Methods: The next time the weather is lovely, go for a walk outside, barefoot and grounded. I love to scout for Golden Ratio examples when I am grounding, similar to hunting for hearts in nature (as suggested in the summer activities section). Identifying the Golden Ratio in nature is another spirit-nurturing way to connect with the earth. Each time you discover a spiral, stop, touch the earth in some way (if you are not barefoot, simply reach out and touch a tree or the ground with your hand) and take three deep breaths. It's a great reminder that we are safely held by something bigger than ourselves, and because of this we don't have to carry

our problems or burdens alone. When you see a spiral that reminds you of the sacred design of our universe, breath in that support that nature provides deeply with every inhalation and exhale out any anxiety, fear, worry, or feeling of separation. Three deep breaths is enough to make a physiologic change in your heart rate and stress levels, so whenever I see a spiral I always stop for three supportive and releasing deep breaths. Because you are grounding, you may want to visualize energy from the earth infusing into you, saturating you from the ground up with every inhale, and purifying your body, releasing inflammation, and reducing tension and pain with every exhale.

I also highly recommend photographing all the spirals you see along the way when you take a grounded walk outside. If drawing is more your thing, bring a sketchpad with you to sketch examples of spirals in nature, or maybe bring some spiraled treasures home to add to your seasonal nature collection (as described earlier in the chapter).

Some items that reveal the Golden Ratio that abound in the fall include:

Pinecones

Dried flower seed heads

Apples (cut in half)

Vines on pumpkins and gourds

Leaf patterns

Celebrating Practices

Every season we have plenty to celebrate with Mother Earth. In this section I offer some ideas on how to take the party outdoors and throw a seasonal grounding shindig! In fall we have the fall equinox (also called Mabon) to celebrate, and with Thanksgiving we can infuse our celebration with the spirit of gratitude and giving thanks. Let’s get planning…

Autumn Activity 14: Fall Equinox Gratitude Party

The grand finale of a fall equinox party is a bonfire. If you are lucky enough to have a yard with a fire pit, that's a perfect setting; if not, an inexpensive alternative is to throw your fall equinox party at a campsite. Most tent campsites cost around $20 for the day and night and come with a fire pit area, picnic tables, and access to a bathroom area for guests. Each attendee can contribute a few dollars to reserve the space for the day to help you cover it. Now, create an invitation list, and be sure to mention that this is a barefoot party where guests will be encouraged to slip off their shoes and get grounded.

Potluck dinner. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, one of the easiest ways to throw a no-stress party is to ask each guest to bring a dish to share. Simple, comforting, warming foods like soup, stew, chili, casseroles, and home-baked breads are all very welcome fall foods that are easy to share and require only one dish to bring!

Simple fire pit dinner. For true simplicity, have a pile of hotdogs (and veggie dogs) and a bag of apples out with several roasting sticks so guests can cook their own over the fire any time! If you've never roasted an apple over a fire, please do yourself a favor and try it. No need for any other ingredients, just a warm toasted apple eaten (once it cools) right off of the roasting stick. It's better than any applesauce out there and has no sugar added or needed. Cap off your fire pit dinner with a bag of marshmallows for roasting, and your guests will be happily fed without any cooking required by the host or hostess.

Elaborate Thanksgiving fire pit meal. If you want to go all out, you can smoke a turkey breast over a fire in just about two hours, or use a Dutch oven to cook it; just be sure the internal temperature reads 180°F before removing it from the fire. Thanksgiving sides are very campfire friendly: roasting

corn on the cob, sweet potatoes, and green beans is delicious, easy, and so healthy; a tossed salad on the side and some cranberry sauce rounds it out.

Party favors: leaf crowns. After the guests arrive and you've encouraged everyone to kick off their shoes, have each guest make a crown of colorful fall leaves and other nature treasures before feasting on dinner!

Materials: Brown paper lunch bags cut into crowns 3 inches tall, 2-inch extra-strength double-sided tape, stapler.

Method: Each guest can slip a paper bag ring onto their head to check the fit, folding and stapling it to tighten if needed. Then each guest simply runs a strip of double-sided tape around the outside of their crown and starts on a nature hunt to stick on leaves, small twigs, pinecones, seedpods, and whatever else they are drawn to wear! Some larger items may benefit from stapling to the crown. These crowns are incredibly beautiful, and each guest's will be completely different from the others.

Party favors: leaf art. In addition to the wearable art of the leaf crowns, it's really nice for each guest to have some art to go home with. Set up an art area on a picnic table or blanket spread out in the campsite for guests to work on their leaf collages whenever they feel drawn to it.

Materials: Card stock, glue sticks, lamination sheets. 3M makes very easy-to-use double-sided lamination sheets, or you can simply cut clear contact paper into rectangles large enough to cover the card stock.

Method: Invite guests to collect colorful leaves and other beautiful fall nature objects that are relatively flat. Using a glue stick, adhere leaves and other materials to the card stock in a pleasing pattern. Guests can make beautiful overlapping leaf designs, glue them into spiraling Golden Ratios, create hearts or other shapes, use small thin twigs

to make lines or words or sun bursts, and so on. Once the glued items have dried in place, peel the contact paper and stick it directly over top of the design to seal it. An alternative, if you want to do away with the card stock and glue altogether, is to have each guest peel one sheet of contact paper or lamination paper and add items directly to the sticky side of the page. Be forewarned: lamination/contact paper is extremely sticky; do not attempt to move or shift an object once it touches the paper. Once your guests have created the designs they want, have them seal the top with a second piece of clear contact/lamination paper. This results in a transparent collage that can be hung in a window as a fall sun catcher!

Crafting station: edible garlands. Invite guests to create an edible craft that they can take home to hang on a tree or bush to feed the birds. It's simple to string cereal, popcorn, and dried fruits onto yarn or string and drape it across bare branches for the beautiful creatures that share our earth.

Materials: Various edibles: cereal with holes, popcorn, dried apples, dried apricots, raisins, cranberries, string or yarn cut into 3-foot-long pieces, large safety needles.

Methods: Show guests how to thread pieces of yarn or string onto a large dull needle (plastic safety needles work great as do large quilting needles) and string with foods to make an edible garland for wildlife. These are so beautiful draped over barren fall branches and will have your guests excitedly checking their strands each day to see if local birds or wildlife are enjoying the treat!

Gratitude bonfire. As the sky darkens and night falls, have everyone gather around the fire to stay warm as the temperature cools. It's lovely to have guests reflect on what they are grateful for as fall transitions us to the introspection of wintertime, and to offer expressions of gratitude for the year so far. Have sheets of paper out and guide guests through a gratitude offering similar to the Fire Pit Release

Ceremony described earlier. This time, instead of focusing on things you would like to release, you'll all focus on things you are grateful for as you enter into the season of Thanksgiving. Guests can write as simply or as elaborately as they would like about things that they appreciate in their lives, and one by one toss them into the fire to be transformed into light and heat. Encourage guests to read the gratitude offerings out loud, if they would like, before adding them to the flames. After all guests have had a turn, stand together around the fire taking several deep breaths of love and support of the beautiful community of friendship and blessings you have shared tonight at this fall equinox party.

Gratitude meditation. If you like, guide guests through a peaceful gratitude meditation, such as this one from Jack Kornfield, "A Meditation on Gratitude and Joy."[44] It's simple, beautiful, and deeply moving. Invite your guests to get comfortable sitting or lying around the warm fire and to take several deep breaths before you begin; as you read this meditation slowly, allowing a pause between each sentence, they will breathe in and out the words and gratitude that they feel in their heart space:

> With gratitude, I remember the people, animals, and plants that bless my life every day.
>
> With gratitude, I remember the elders and ancestors who came before me.
>
> I offer gratitude for the safety and well-being I have been given.
>
> I offer gratitude for the blessing of this earth that I have been given.
>
> I offer gratitude for the measure of health that I have been given.
>
> I offer gratitude for the family and friends I have been given.

I offer gratitude for the community I have been given.

I offer gratitude for the teachings and lessons I have been given.

Gratitude prayer + stargazing. Lastly, have your guests settle in around the fire, sitting either directly on the earth, on rocks around the fire pit, or in chairs, with blankets tucked around them, but bare toes or fingertips, warmed by the fire, resting on the earth. Gazing at the fire is lovely; so is lying back looking up at the stars. If you like, you can have naked-eye star charts printed out for guests to refer to, and have guests take turns sharing any constellations they can find. Even just taking a few deep breaths together under the light of the moon can be profoundly moving. In the fall night sky from the northern hemisphere, you can see Pisces, Andromeda, Aquarius, Gemini, Taurus, Pegasus, Orion, Ursa Major and Minor, and even the Andromeda Galaxy with the naked eye. This galaxy is even larger than our Milky Way; its light is over two million years old by the time it's visible to us on Earth.

Close by sharing this beautiful Gaelic blessing as the guests continue to gaze at the wondrous stars overhead:

Deep peace of the running water to you

Deep peace of the flowing air to you

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you

Deep peace of the shining stars to you

Deep peace of the gentle night to you

Moon and stars pour their healing light to you

Deep peace to you

Deep peace to you

Weekly Routines

Here is a suggested weekly routine for autumn grounding; you can pick and choose from it, or mine all of the activities from this entire season to put together your own.

Sunday: Start out each week with a fall nature collection walk.

Monday: Go concrete grounding at lunchtime.

Tuesday: Enjoy after-dinner games grounding on a sidewalk.

Wednesday: Do the grounded tree meditation (seated outside).

Thursday: Step out for moon or stargazing at night before bedtime.

Friday: Eat dinner outdoors by a fire pit, grounding through bare feet.

Saturday: Make a trip to a local farmers market, apple orchard, or pumpkin patch, taking time to ground before heading home.

Round out this season with a grounding camping trip and throw a fall equinox party to share grounding with your friends, family, and loved ones, and you'll see why fall is one of the richest and easiest seasons for grounding. Get as much grounded time outside as possible while the colors are inspiring and the weather is not yet bitterly cold, as you will be longing for these days once winter fully arrives. That said, there are still plenty of ways to get creative and continue to ground even during the darkest and coldest days of the year, so winter? We welcome you too. As fall turns into winter, let's dive into the next chapter, full steam ahead!

CHAPTER 6:

Staying Grounded and Warm in Winter's Depths

To be honest, I've always struggled with cold in winter. I wish I could share a story of appreciation, like how as a child I loved to lie curled up in a snow tunnel or meditatively watched icicles drip from rooftops—but nope, I am always the one inside, sitting close to the fire. No matter how many insulating layers I wear, the moment I step outside I feel miserable. The cold is so jarring that I cannot even speak. The relief I feel when going back inside is a transcendental experience.

So when I realized that I could stand barefoot in my garage, on the concrete, standing near a space heater and getting grounded even in the coldest days of winter, I felt such joy. It was liberating. I have transformed my garage into a sheltered space, with comfortable chairs, a coffee table, artwork on the walls, and that space heater I can sit close to. This has allowed me to continue grounding daily for 365 days a year, even on days when I can't fathom going outside.

I know some folks love the wintertime, with its white earth and cold, fresh air. My husband is one of these winter lovers. He thinks nothing of going barefoot for hours outside, even in the winter. You may be more like him, or more like me, or somewhere in between! So in this chapter I am going to share the entire spectrum: ways you can get grounded outside, even if briefly, along with ways you can ground in a more sheltered location within your warm and cozy home.

Nurturing Practices

These healthy routines are particularly nurturing for your body in the cold months. For winter, grounding through your hands becomes key, as well as finding alternative areas of your living space that may be grounded. Most people can find at least one way to ground in a sheltered location. For those who can't, I'm also going to show you how you can ground indoors by running a grounding wire into your home. So never fear; just because it's winter doesn't mean you can't continue to nurture your innate health through grounding all season long.

Winter Activity 1: Grounding Outside Through Your Hands

In winter, when freezing temperatures force you to wear socks and insulated shoes, focus on touching the earth with your hands. Remember, grounding is instantaneous, so touching the earth even for a few seconds truly does ground you! And because your entire body is conductive, touching the earth with your fingertips is every bit as grounding and healing as standing totally barefoot with both feet on the ground.

Materials: Fingerless gloves, mittens, jacket with warm pockets (optional).

Methods: It is infinitely easier to slip your warm hands out of a pocket or a glove to touch your fingertips to the earth than it is to take off shoes or boots and socks in the winter! For one, you can stay standing instead of finding a place to sit down to remove your shoes; in snow and ice this can make all the difference in the world. Also, it is so much easier to alternate hands to extend the period of time you are grounded—keeping one hand warm in a pocket while the other hand touches concrete or a tree (pine needles are grounded!) and then switch hands when the first hand gets too cold—simply put your colder hand back into your pocket or glove to reheat. (Consider handwarmer packets; they're inexpensive, nontoxic, and last for hours.) You can also

consider wearing mittens that fold back, exposing your fingertips while keeping your hands warm, or my favorite, fingerless gloves. There are also conductive gloves available (I have these waiting for you on my website as well as other grounding tools); metal fibers woven through them conduct grounding right through the glove—no skin exposure necessary!

Winter Activity 2: Grounding Through Animals

Another easy way to stay bundled up but grounded outdoors, if you are lucky enough to own a beloved dog, horse, or other animal, is to ground through your pet! While you keep your toes toasty in your winter shoes and boots, your barefooted pet is touching the earth and is fully grounded. Capitalize on this by petting your dog often as you take him on a walk outside or nuzzling your horse before and after a ride. Because thick fur is insulating, reach for areas where fur is thinner—like ears, snout, and belly—or reach your fingers deep into the fur to reach the skin. (See the Resources for a video demonstration of grounding with your pet.)

Winter Activity 3: Grounding with a Partner

If you are like me, you absolutely can't tolerate cold for long. The blood flow in my fingers and toes just shuts down completely, and I am left with numb, white digits that turn purple and burn when they warm back up. But do you have a friend or a family member who has perpetually warm hands? A child who refuses to wear gloves, a friend who seems indifferent to the cold, or a spouse who runs warm? I am lucky enough to have a husband who is a walking furnace—always warm, even in bitter cold. He may not even own a pair of gloves. When we are taking a wintertime walk, he always touches the trees as we pass,

or if we are sitting on a bench he will lean down to touch the sidewalk or the metal arm of a park bench, and even with my hand inside my pocket holding onto his hand, I'm as grounded as if I were lying on a beach! What a relief! If you have a friend or loved one who will hold your hand and be the one to ground, you can keep your hand tucked warmly in theirs and reap all of the same benefits. And actually, medical studies show that holding hands calms the brain[45] and decreases pain,[46] so this method of grounding might just be the best one in the entire book!

Winter Activity 4: Grounding Indoors: Yes, You Can

There are many different ways in which your indoor living space or work space may actually be grounded. This can transform your grounding practice, because once you discover these indoor grounding spots you can use them year round, even when there's no need to escape the cold outside.

Materials: Indoor space to explore.

Method: Take this list of indoor grounding options with you as you explore your home and work spaces. In general, try to go to the lowest level of any building you are in and find an area that has concrete poured directly on the ground. As long as it is not painted or sealed with a varnish, concrete is grounded. Many of my patients ground all winter long in alternative locations throughout their home and work—from basements of apartment buildings that have laundry machines (they stand there folding laundry grounded twice a week in the basement) to the ground floor of the parking garage at work (they ground for a few minutes before heading into the office for the day and after leaving the office in the late afternoon) to a covered picnic table shelter at their local park (where they ground every weekend for an hour).

Seek out a covered, sheltered area to ground in when it's no longer barefoot season. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Basement or ground floor: In every building you have access to, whether at home or at work, take a moment to check out the bottom level. Many buildings have a concrete floor poured as a slab directly on the earth. Concrete will ground you even if you are warm and snuggled indoors, whether in a parking deck or a basement. I have patients who took up the flooring of their utility room to create a comfortable grounding space. Be creative and do routine tasks there—read, work on your laptop, or—as one of my patients does in her apartment basement—ground while you fold laundry.
- Cellar: Some buildings still have dirt floors in their cellars, like my best friend's home. If you are lucky enough to have a dirt floor in your cellar, you are all set to stay indoors and ground directly on the earth.
- Garage: Many homes have a garages or carport that is sheltered but has a concrete grounded floor. My home is built up off the earth, with a crawl space underneath it, but my garage, with its concrete slab floor, is perfect. I've moved the cars out and moved myself in, complete with space heater. Patients who don't have a garage but have a concrete or gravel driveway or a yard have popped up floorless tents to use. You can place these directly on the earth to set up a temporary grounding shelter.
- Porch: If you have a porch that provides some protection from the elements, consider touching the trees surrounding it. One patient has a balcony on a second-floor apartment with gorgeous tall pine trees that she can reach out and touch. She goes out every morning and evening with a steaming mug of tea to sip as she touches pine needles for several minutes to

start and end each day.

- Shed: Many people have a shed, barn, or other storage facility that affords some protection from the elements while still providing direct access to the ground they are built upon. If you are lucky enough to have a storage shed or barn that keeps out the snow and dampens the wind, consider this your wintertime grounding spot! If you don't have these options, make it a point to explore all the public parks in your area. Most parks have a picnic shelter where the floor is concrete so you can have a roof over your head and a dry table to sit at.
- Indoor pipes: Metal water pipes are all grounded, which is required by law. So if your home has water pipes that are copper or galvanized steel, simply touching your metal water fixtures will ground you! You can lie back in a nice hot bubble bath, place your toes on the tap, and take a beautiful grounded bath nightly. Or you can directly touch the metal water pipe beneath your sink to get instantly grounded. (See the Resources section for a video on how to do this.)
- Steam radiators: Metal radiators are typically made from cast iron (older units) or steel, copper, or aluminum (newer units), which are all required by law to be grounded. Be careful not to get burned, as these heating units do of course get boiling hot. But by turning off your radiator and letting it cool, you can get safely grounded indoors while touching it and still benefit from the protection of an indoor enclosed space.
- Pouring hot water on the ground: Okay, this isn't technically an indoor idea, but this was such a clever idea from a reader that I thought it was worth sharing! He loves the feeling of his feet touching the earth outside so much, that even in the winter snow he discovered his own way to tolerate a good ten minutes of barefoot grounding outside. He takes a pot of hot water outside his front doorstep and pours it on the

ground, melting the snow and warming the earth below. He stands there barefoot for as long as he can stand it before retreating indoors. He says he can usually get at least a solid ten minutes a day of grounding this way, no matter how cold it is outside.

- Grounding stake: if all else fails, you can very easily craft a simple grounding stake and run a grounding wire in through a window or doorway. I will walk you through this in detail in the craft section of this chapter.

Winter Activity 5: Going on a Nature Hunt, Grounded

Decorating your home with a nature table will help you stay focused on your practice. I highly recommend starting each week with a grounded walk outside to collect seasonal items to update your table (in the winter, use your hands to ground you by touching trees, earth, concrete, and so on, and keep your toes warm inside boots). Each week, replace items with fresh ones you've found.

Materials: Thirty minutes of time to ground through fingertips. Fingerless gloves (optional).

Method: Walk around with an open mind and an open heart, looking for small treasures in nature to appreciate. In the winter, there is still plenty of beauty to be found in nature. Wintertime collections might include pictures of animal tracks in the snow, pictures of beautiful icicles or snow drifts, pinecones, winter nuts and berries, rocks, bark, interesting sticks, twigs, fallen branches, fallen evergreen sprigs, holly and other broadleaf evergreen foliage.

Consider designating a small area of your home to update weekly with seasonally appropriate found treasures. Every time you walk by your natural collection, on a shelf, table, windowsill, or bathroom counter, it will remind you to

ask yourself if you have gone outside and grounded today.

Healing Practices

Let's take your health to the next level with specific suggestions for health and healing that are wonderfully suited for winter. It's hibernation season, and I can think of no better time to fix our sleep deficit as well as off-gas a year full of stress than in the winter when nature is calling for us to snuggle in and sleep longer.

Winter Activity 6: Sleep Reset Retreat

If you can give yourself at least one solid week this winter to prioritize sleep, you can do much to repair your body and boost your wellness. Sleep—or lack of it—has a huge impact on the human body. One thing is certain: your body needs good sleep to function over a lifetime. Poor sleep affects the health of your heart, increases your risk of depression and anxiety, increases your risk of obesity, doubles the risk of death from metabolic syndrome,47 and is even linked to Alzheimer's48 and other brain issues.49 As if that weren't bad enough, lack of sleep puts you at greater risk of death from accidents and is very risky when driving a car or other motor vehicle. Getting a good night's sleep decreases the risk of heart attack and stroke,50 suicide,51 preterm birth,52 and childhood obesity and diabetes.53 Taken together, these medical studies show that we need to address even mild sleep impairment.

So whether you are a night owl or just have trouble prioritizing sleep, winter's short days and long nights offer a great time to adjust your circadian rhythm to protect your health and possibly prolong your life. Your body naturally craves hibernating now more than ever; use this natural desire for an earlier bedtime to scale back from staying up late. Data shows that shifting your bedtime earlier by just one

hour—one hour!—is enough to make a measurable improvement in how your body functions, and specifically in your mood, the very next day.[54] Our brain has a beautiful relationship with the energy of Mother Earth. Grounding supports everything our brain does, including deepening restorative sleep—more crucial to support in the winter than in any other season.

Scientists have long known that the earth's energy field has as much to do with our sleep/wake pattern as the sun—perhaps even more. Even when we are cut off from all indicators of day and night, the earth's field (the Schumann resonances—a series of peaks at the extremely low-frequency end of the earth's electromagnetic field) can keep us in patterns close to a twenty-four-hour rhythm. From this knowledge the researchers postulated that it is actually the frequency of the earth that regulates our natural biorhythms. So it's easy to understand how directly connecting to the earth can enhance restorative sleep at night and boost daytime wakefulness, especially during the winter, when you can feel cut off from enjoying time outside in nature.

In addition to normalizing our circadian rhythm, grounding also decreases our stress hormone levels and allows us to naturally get a better night's sleep. Grounding truly allows us to get into a state of surrender. This is why it allows our cortisol levels to drop and allows us to sleep more deeply at night, to relax, to embrace a better mood and a brighter outlook. So let Mother Nature support you.

Sleep Makeover Tips

First things first—schedule an earlier bedtime for this entire sleep reset week. Shoot for (at a minimum) one hour earlier than your normal bedtime, and prioritize your sleep by sticking to this goal no matter what comes up to steal your time during the day. With a one hour earlier bedtime in place, add any (or all) of these next seven tips:

- Morning: Start the day with grounding. To easily and naturally correct your circadian rhythm, establish a habit of getting natural light on your face every single morning, as early as possible, outdoors—ideally for twenty minutes each day. During the winter, make a special effort to begin each day of your sleep reset grounding outside in the morning—it's more important to get that morning light on your face in the winter than in any other season. Not only does this effectively boost your daytime energy levels (making you more active during the day, when it's healthiest to be active), but grounding plus a.m. light will also help you sleep better that night naturally, without taking any medications or supplements.
- Evening: Dry brush exfoliation ritual. Similarly to treating yourself to a pedicure to get your bare feet prepped for grounding in the spring, in the winter I encourage you to exfoliate your entire body from head to toe. In winter it is common for us to build up a layer of dry skin (thanks to dry heated air indoors and whipping winter winds outside). And similar to thick bark on a tree that insulates your touch from the inner living grounded core, thick dry skin can interfere with your body's ability to get grounded, delaying the connection or, in very severe dry skin cases, preventing it altogether. So this ritual is fabulous to increase your body's conductivity. As I dry brush my body, I love to visualize that I am whisking off and releasing old energy that is no longer aligned with my current, ever-renewing and expanding soul energy. Use a soft-bristled natural hair brush, a dry loofah mitt, or a dry washcloth to dry brush your skin. Think about all the burdens you carry every day. Think about all the ideas and feelings you have attached to your body that don't serve you well. Think about the stress, tension, and burdens on your body as a grey film that clings to your skin. You want to gently buff those away with that dry

brush or washcloth on your dry skin, sweeping the extra unwanted energy right off. Brushing up your arms, up your legs, up your torso (always toward your heart), just sweep off all of the negativity and stress, and feel open to your true, glorious, optimistic nature as it is revealed underneath. With freshly exfoliated skin, the next thing to do is to slip into a warm relaxing bathtub.

- Evening: Take a bath with Epsom salts. After the exfoliation ritual, add a cup or two of Epsom salts (which are pure magnesium and act as a natural muscle relaxant, helping to decrease your muscle tension before you head to bed). Soaking for fifteen minutes in a warm, magnesium-rich bath with freshly exfoliated skin is such a wonderful way to prep your body for bed. And even better—if, as suggested at the start of this chapter, you have found that your bathroom pipes are grounded, make sure you touch the spigot with your foot as you relax in your bath. (See the Resources section for a video.)
- Bedtime: Candlelight. To prepare for your sleep reset, consider treating yourself to a beautiful beeswax candle to use each night as you bathe, change, and get ready for bed. For this week of sleep resetting, I highly recommend candlelight in the bathroom while you bathe and in your bedroom before bed—no bright light, no TV or computer screens, and if you must watch TV or use your cell phone or computer, please wear blue light blocking glasses at bedtime (or use a blue light filter that fits your screen). While you are at it, leave your cell phone out of the room or in airplane mode so the radiation doesn't interfere with your body's ability to relax deeply into sleep. Be certain to extinguish your candle's flame before falling asleep, or if you prefer to sleep with candlelight going, use a battery-operated flameless candle instead. You can even put some of these battery operated candles on a timer so that

candlelight is waiting to greet you in your bedroom every evening, encouraging you to stay on schedule with going to sleep an hour earlier.

- Bedtime: Hot water bottle. We have a deep cellular craving to feel connected to a tribe—a survival instinct that has helped boost survival since the beginning of humankind. Sleeping in groups helped the earliest humans feel safe to surrender to sleep. In our modern homes with locking doors and windows and security systems, maybe we no longer need to sleep in a big group with a lookout posted outside, but to your unconscious this instinct to sleep share is still an urgent need. For those who sleep alone, in order to deepen sleep, I have found that tucking a hot water bottle in bed at any age (children and adults alike) satisfies this need to feel the warm presence of others nearby and allows us fully to surrender to sleep. Other options include letting a pet sleep with you or, of course, snuggling up to a partner if you have one!
- Bedtime: Use a cold pack on your forehead. It's long been known that cooler air temperatures in the bedroom help deepen sleep. The typical advice is to make the bedroom a little cooler at nighttime (68 to 70°F is ideal). But did you know that simply cooling your forehead for five minutes or more while going to sleep actually allows your body to release more melatonin (a sleep-regulating hormone) and help brings sleep on faster?55

So your wintertime sleep reset routine, for at least one week, will be this: morning grounding in daylight for twenty minutes or more, evening exfoliation and an Epsom salts bath, candlelight, and prioritizing sleep and going to bed one hour earlier than usual, with a hot water bottle in the bed and a cold pack for your forehead. I hope this routine helps you positively regulate your circadian rhythm, boost your mood, remedy your sleep deprivation, and even protect the

longevity of your lifespan.

Centering Practices

I hope you can do the guided healing meditation I offer here while grounded outside! For winter, the best meditation is one that brings you into a nurturing cocoon, giving you time and space to reboot and reemerge the next season transformed. So to help enhance this imagery, it's wonderful to go outside bundled up and cocoon-like—even burrowed down deep into a sleeping bag! Or snuggle under a canopy or tent outdoors, to further insulate yourself. If you can just have fingertips out of a mitten or a fingerless glove, touching the earth, you are fully grounded. If you can't do this meditation outside, find an indoor space to be grounded (see ideas in the previous Nurturing Practices section) or use a grounding stake and grounding cord in your living space, as outlined in the Creating Practices section that follows.

Winter Activity 7: Winter Healing Meditation: Wrapped in a Nurturing Cocoon

Get grounded outside, if possible. It's okay to be bundled up in winter coats and boots and snuggled deeply within a blanket or a sleeping bag. With your fingertips touching the ground or concrete beneath you or the pine needles of a tree next to you, your body will be as fully grounded as if you were lying in a bathing suit on the beach.

Method: When you have found a comfortable space to be grounded, read through the meditation (or listen to it at http: //www.newharbin ger.com/44895). Once you have read through it or listened a few times, you can guide yourself on your own any time.

Lie on your back, close your eyes, and begin to breath in slowly, deeply, and fully.

Relax more and more with each breath. Allow yourself to draw inward, away from the external world, and focus on

your heart center. Allow the world around you to grow quiet and still as you focus on your internal warmth and sensations instead of the outer world.

With each breath, you fill up your heart space with a healing, warm, comforting white light, glowing softly at first and getting more intense with every breath. Calm and peace wash over you as you are filled with this comforting, healing light.

The light spills out from your heart space, spreading throughout your body, rays of light filling every cell in your body. You are radiant. Continue to expand the reach of this light, strengthening it with every breath. Let it spill through your abdomen, your back, down your legs, out your arms, filling your neck and head. As the space around you fills with light, you find it is so healing, relaxing, protective…it encases you in a feeling of protective comfort.

You are surrounded with light now; it is glowing past your body in all directions, encasing you in a bubble of light. You find the outer skin of this bubble begins to thicken, like the woven fibers of a cocoon, strengthen the boundary between you and the outside world, further buffering you from the world around you. Sounds go faint and fade into the distance. External sensations feel so very far away. You are totally at peace, centered in your own light-filled cocoon.

The cocoon continues weaving and enclosing you in the most beautiful light, and you feel so relaxed and peaceful, encased in the center of this light. It’s as if you are in a light-filled womb and your entire body is being reworked for its own divine good, allowing every stress to release, allowing every energy in your body to transform and uplevel. You feel that your body is in a divine upgrade that you don’t have to dictate or understand or direct; you simply relax and receive.

The outside of your cocoon becomes a soft flexible shell, helping to protect you so that you can let go of monitoring your external circumstances altogether. You no longer need to control or even interact with the external world, as your internal cocoon environment is so perfectly custom created to support your deepest energetic needs. In this place of deep and perfect protection, you feel so safe.

You can rest so easily inside this cocoon of light. Time loses its meaning, and you no longer care whether five minutes have passed or five hours. You feel completely whole. The shell holds you lovingly and comfortably.

Only love fills this cocoon. Nothing else can touch you. You are free, completely and fully free to immerse yourself in pure, positive love. It is safe to open and receive this love and to radiate and saturate this love in and throughout every inch of your cocoon.

You are soaked in pure complete love inside the embrace of your cocoon. Nothing else can come in but love. Nothing else can radiate but love. Breathing in and out, you are soaking every cell in your body with love.

Over time, you notice that all energy that is not love simply bounces off the outside of this cocoon. This cocoon has held you in a safe space that serves the highest good of your soul journey.

You notice you are changing. You feel stronger. You feel a shift coming within you. You are growing. You feel more expansive. Your body and your energy are in pure positive alignment with each other and with the love that fills your safe space.

Eventually you begin to notice a restless feeling. You feel so fully saturated and complete that you begin to become curious about the outside world again. You notice there is less and less space between you and the outside of the cocoon, as the cocoon begins to settle onto your skin. It

falls inward, like shrink wrap, gently weaving its outer layer into the outer layer of your body. Fully flexible, this protective outer layer becomes your own body's boundaries, and the cocoon simply becomes the top layer of you. Everywhere you go, every way you move, you carry with you this protective boundary, saturated with love. You radiate love, and only love can reach you. You look at your hands, your torso, your legs, even your feet, and you see this layer of shimmering light settle over you, becoming one with you.

As you move freely through the day, you are still encased in the loving protection of this cocoon. As your love grows and expands and radiates, you find you no longer need this cocoon, and it begins to fall away. Lighter and lighter, until it is thinner and lighter than even tissue paper, so thin and transparent that you no longer see it. As your inner being beams its rays of light outward in all directions, the cocoon naturally dissolves and falls away with divine timing, once it is no longer serving you.

You are the complete source of the light. You are the complete source of the love. You shine as you reawaken to the world around you, feeling more free than you have ever felt now that you have had this nurturing time in this cocoon to awaken more fully than ever before to the outside world.

Taking full, cleansing deep breaths, begin to open your eyes, stretch, and embrace movement again. As you sit up, stand up, and move forward into your day today, you know that you have traces of this nurturing cocoon protecting you invisibly. Whenever you feel tired or off center, you can choose to have the cocoon strengthen its protection, even lifting off of you and encasing you in the protective bubble of pure positive love any time, freely available to you. And just as easily as the cocoon can expand to buffer you from the outside world, it can evaporate and fall away when you prefer, turning translucent and then disintegrating altogether

when you wish to step out from it.

Creating Practices

In this section, I suggest ways to express your inner creativity while soaking in the support from the earth. In the winter, making sure you have the option to ground indoors can be a game changer for how much time you are able to spend grounding each day, and it's lovely to incorporate the comforting flicker of candlelight as we curl up and nurture our body during the hibernating months. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Winter Activity 8: Create a Grounding Stake

This simple project has the potential to totally revolutionize the way you ground, giving you access to Mother Earth outside any time you like from the comfort of your indoor living space. (See the Resources section for a video.) I can't urge you too strongly to get these simple supplies and create a grounding stake. For the convenience of a ready-made grounding stake and cord, see the Resources section. But they are easy to make; here's how:

Materials: Pliers, any metal grounding stake such as a tent stake or garden stake (or simply a piece of copper, steel or aluminum pipe), duct tape (optional), an inline fuse holder with replaceable fuses, an insulated wire cord long enough to reach into your home (30 feet is a standard length for a grounding cord and should work well), and an alligator clip.

Method:

To create the grounding stake:

1. Strip the insulation from the last several inches of the wire and wrap it around the top of the stake or pipe, securing with duct tape if desired.
2. Insert the inline fuse holder into the wire and place a new

fuse into the holder. This protects you from any surge that could travel up the line from lightning (I recommend not using a grounding rod during thunderstorms, but it's also nice to have this safety feature in place to protect you from the unexpected).

3. Attach the alligator clip to the other end of the wire, inserting the bare wire into the holder at the base of the alligator clip and crimping it shut with your pliers to secure.

That's it! You now have a fully effective grounding stake and grounding cord that will ground you when you cannot go outside to directly touch the earth.

To install the grounding stake:

1. Push the grounding stake gently several inches into the earth outside. If using a tent stake, gently hammer it into the ground as you would to secure a tent. If using a softer, more flexible metal, such as copper tubing, first soak the ground with water to make it easier to push the stake into the ground, or install the grounding stake after a rain when the ground is already soft.
2. Run the wire through a window or doorway (and yes, you can shut and lock the window or door on your grounding cord and it will still ground you). You have several options:
    - By simply touching the alligator clip, you are fully grounded indoors. You can clip the alligator clip onto something that will hold it securely against your skin; popular places include a waistband or bra strap.
    - Tuck the cord and clip down into your socks so that the sock holds it against your ankle or foot, or place the alligator clip on the floor and gently rest your bare foot on top of it.
    - If you wear any metal items on your body (a stainless steel watch band is perfect) that you can clip the grounding cord onto, the metal will

become grounded too. You can turn any metal watch band, ring, cuff, belt, and so on into a personal grounding device by clipping the alligator clip to it and making sure the metal band is secured tightly enough on your body to stay firmly flush against your skin.

- Or, perhaps easiest of all, you can clip the alligator clip to a piece of aluminum foil or other thin metal sheet and place that under your bare feet to be securely grounded while you watch TV, read, eat, and so on, indoors. Enjoy experimenting with grounding inside. You can also create a few grounding rods with grounding cords to gift to your friends and loved ones. (See the Resources section for a video.)

Winter Activity 9: Candle Making

There are lots of kits out there that make it easy to create your own beeswax candles. You can get as elaborate as you like with melting wax, adding a wick to recycled metal and glass containers to create candles, but my favorite is the most simple: hand rolling beeswax sheets around a wick. No heating, no melting, no pouring, no cleanup, and the natural beeswax sheets are gorgeous and smell so good. Here's how to create your own:

Materials: Pure 100-percent beeswax sheet, cotton wick, scissors.

Methods:

Lay the beeswax sheet on a firm surface and lay the wick along one side.

1. Cut the wick about a 1/2 inch longer than the wax; for example if you are using an 8-inch-wide beeswax sheet, allow an extra 1/2 inch of wick to hang over the edge on one

side.

2. With the wick all the way to edge of the sheet, start rolling the wax sheet around the wick. Begin by bending a very narrow edge of the wax around the wick to secure it; aim for an 1/8-inch fold over the wick. Press down firmly to make sure the wax is secure around the wick and it is as straight as possible.
3. Now, with a lighter touch (no longer pressing firmly or indenting the beeswax sheet in any way, so the beautiful honeycomb pattern stays visible), continue to slowly roll up the candle, keeping the roll as straight as possible so that the ends stay even.
4. Once you have fully rolled the entire wax sheet, gently press the edge down into the side of the candle to secure it.
5. Stand the candle up on its end, and admire your beautiful homemade candle, ready to light up your room with flickering candlelight and filling it with the comforting scent of all-natural beeswax.
6. Have fun creating your own variations on this DIY process. Consider:
    - Cutting the beeswax sheet in half or even in quarters before rolling, to make short candles and votives, or lengthwise to make tall thin candles.
    - Adding two sheets together (just overlap the ends slightly and press firmly to secure before you begin rolling) to create super-thick column candles.
    - Roll up the beeswax sheet diagonally, first cutting off one corner before rolling (place wick on the longest side), to create a tapered candle.
    - Use colored beeswax for colored candles.
    - Use small cookie cutters to cut shapes out of beeswax sheets and press onto the finished candles for decorative elements and seasonal

designs.

Winter Activity 10: Gratitude Journal

I end this Creating Practices section with an activity that combines the first two projects into one creative practice. There is really no time as meaningful as the wintertime to gather your blessings around you and end the year grateful for all that has happened to you, both expected and unexpected, wanted and unwanted, and to express gratitude for your life and the fact that you exist at all. A gratitude journal, filled out nightly by candlelight and while grounded, is a wonderful, peaceful routine to practice throughout the dark months of hibernation. After diving so deeply inward each night, you will emerge in spring feeling ready to use your current platform as a springboard to a whole new level of health and vitality, ushering in even more things to be grateful for! Let's go!

Material: Journal, pen, candle (optional), grounding stake (optional).

Methods: Lists make easy, nonintimidating journal prompts because they are relatively quick to do and provide you with an immediate and tangible result that you can easily review to see your cumulative blessings. There is no better list than a list of the things you cherish. The things you love. The things that make life worth living. In short, the things that you are grateful for.

I highly recommend getting a special journal that you dedicate all winter long to keeping a gratitude list, getting grounded with your grounding stake (or going outside to journal grounded if weather permits), and lighting one of the candles you just made. Let the candlelight spill over the room and soak in the stillness. Allow the warm glow of the flame to soothe you into drawing inward, closing your eyes if you like, and calling to mind all of the things you feel grateful for in

your heart. When you are ready, open your eyes and spend a few minutes jotting some of these down. Don't pressure yourself to make this an all-inclusive list, or you may find yourself avoiding the activity or feeling overwhelmed. This should be a simple, easy exercise that over time you find yourself really looking forward to as you find how much it lifts your mood and spirit. You might not feel like you've captured what you are most thankful for today; just write the first few things that pop into your head and know they are good enough. In the end, you'll have ended the day on a much higher note than most people ever achieve: moving forward into tomorrow with gratitude is pure positive power. If you find yourself at a loss for how to begin, skim this list of gratitude prompts and pick one to write about:

- What is something that has worked out for you recently?
- What is something that is working well for your body right now?
- What is something positive that happened to a loved one?
- Recall and relate a favorite childhood memory.
- Name a favorite song and describe how it makes you feel.
- Describe an accomplishment that you are proud of.
- Talk about a part of the day that you love, and why.
- Describe a holiday tradition you look forward to, and why.
- Describe something you love in the room you are in right now.
- Describe one thing you learned today.
- Recall the last time you smiled and what made you smile.
- Describe a smell you love.
- Describe a favored food and why you enjoy it so much.
- Describe a face you love to see and what you love

about it.
- Describe one way you've nurtured or pampered yourself lately.
- Describe a favored natural setting (beach, lake, mountains, woods, and the like) and what you love about it.
- Describe one of the seasons and what you love about it.
- Describe the last time you interacted with a stranger and felt touched or moved by the encounter.
- Describe one thing you love about your body.
- Describe one thing you love about your personality.
- List three people you are grateful to have in your life right now, and why.
- List three reasons you are happy to be alive right now.
- What do you enjoy about waking up in the morning?
- What makes you smile when you walk in the door of your home?
- What do you love about bedtime?
- Describe one neat thing you learned today.

Moving Practices

In the winter, you can get creative with grounding indoors if you have assembled that grounding stake in the Creating Practices section, or you can take advantage of days when it's possible to head outdoors to stretch or walk. To get you started, here are a few of my favorites wintertime ways to move your body.

Winter Activity 11: Grounded Stretching

Stretch. It's more important to stretch in the wintertime than in any other season, because cold muscles are more likely to be injured, strained, or torn. Picture a bear waking up from

hibernation, stretching his arms out wide and rolling his torso all around to get moving again. If you can stretch like this all winter long, you will keep your body limber and in condition, ready for spring to arrive! The following are my favorite three stretches; if (ideally) you can do them morning and night grounded through your grounding stake (or if you are adventurous, outside on the earth!) your body will thank you. You can even ground inside a tent outdoors if you use your grounding stake and run it into the tent, clipping it to a small piece of aluminum foil and sitting or standing with a foot on the foil for a makeshift grounding tool.

Materials: Ten minutes dedicated to stretching every morning and evening.

Method: Try these three sets of stretches, holding each one for a few minutes on each side. If you'd like, add in your own stretches to lengthen your stretching time.

Neck Stretches: Slowly lower your chin toward your chest and hold the position for one long slow deep breath in and out. Raise your chin, tilt your head back, and look up at the ceiling for another long slow deep breath in and out. Turn your head to the left and then to the right, slowly looking over your shoulder as far as is comfortable, each time for a full deep breath. Repeat this sequence three times to thoroughly loosen up your neck. Finish with a few slow head rolls in each direction.

Spinal twist: Sit on the edge of a chair seat with a nice straight, tall posture, and slowly reach back to one side, placing that hand on the backrest or (if there is no backrest) on the back edge of the seat. Take a few deep breaths, using your hand to gently pull your spine farther around with each breath, deepening the stretch. You can also place your other hand on the opposite knee and pull gently to help deepen the twist. Then slowly release and twist to the other side, holding for several breaths in the same way. To finish, stand up a few feet away from a

desktop, tabletop, or countertop. Place your hands on the countertop edge, arms straight out. Keeping your back and legs straight, lean over until your back is parallel to floor, hinging at the hips and forming an L. (You may need to shuffle your feet to find the right distance.) Relax into this stretch, letting your upper back and head lower to the countertop level. Feel a full stretch in your back, the backs of your legs, and under your arms as you deepen into this stretch for several long breaths, then slowly rise back to an upright position.

Arm circles: These engage the shoulders, triceps, biceps, and upper back, warming up all of those muscles and encouraging circulation. Hold your arms directly out to the side and circle them a few times frontward, then backward. Finish by clasping your hands behind your back, arms straight, and lifting gently to feel a nice stretch across the front of your shoulders. To incorporate further stretching and spinal release, you can twist side to side gently with your hands still clasped, arms behind you. Gently release. Ahhhhhh! Feel how much more at home in your body you feel after a few moments of stretching. It's so worth it.

Winter Activity 12: Grounded Massage

A grounded massage is particularly beneficial in winter, when chilly temperatures make muscles tight and tense, as massage releases tension in the muscles and fascia (which is all highly conductive, as we have learned) and improves blood flow, warming up the muscles even more deeply than stretching exercises can do. There are many different massage techniques; I'll suggest a few to get you started.

Materials: Oil or lotion (my favorite is organic coconut oil).

Method: Find a spot to get grounded while you run through a few massages; this will prime your muscles to relax, your circulation to increase, and any muscle soreness

to ease. For a full body grounded massage, you can run your grounding wire in through a window (or if outside, into a tent for protection from the weather) and touch the alligator clip, or, to enlarge the contact area, clip the grounding wire to a small sheet of aluminum foil and lie on top of it. If you have a partner, take turns massaging each other's back, shoulders, neck, anywhere there is tension. Expose just the part being massaged, keeping the rest of the body warm under blankets. Using coconut oil or another oil, use nice, firm, even strokes on the exposed body part. If you don't have or want to use a partner, or you just want a super-quick massage that still boosts circulation and releases endorphins, it's easy to give yourself a foot or hand massage any time. Sitting outdoors grounded, take turns massaging one foot while the other holds contact with the earth, or if it's just too cold out there, sit inside with the grounding wire placed under the foot you're not massaging. Give each foot a nice full five minutes of firm kneading with oil or massage lotion, then switch sides. That's ten minutes of effortless grounding while also relaxing and deeply nurturing your body. Hand massages are even easier to do to yourself, and of course you don't even have to bother with removing your shoes. With a grounding cord held against your body or foot (just tuck the end of the cord into a sock to be held in place), use hand lotion or massage oil to give the palm of each hand nice firm circular rubs, then spend a minute working down each finger, rubbing both sides and fully relaxing. End by holding firm pressure on the web between your thumb and index finger, then shake out your hands and roll your wrists several times in both directions. There! You have just finished yet another grounding session and released tension throughout your entire body through your hands.

Winter Activity 13: Grounding Through a Dog

Remember how we talked about your pet being naturally

grounded while outdoors? You can turn this concept into a routine way to grab a little extra grounding time without having to directly touch the cold earth outside. Stay bundled up in nice warm boots, jacket, hat, and more while you take your dog out for a walk, knowing that every time you stop and pet your dog with your bare hands, the direct skin contact means you are getting a little extra grounding time in while touching a warm body instead of the frozen environment outside. (See the Resources section for a video on grounding through your pet.)

Materials: Dog, leash.

Method: Each day as you go on a walk with your dog, do a nice five-minute petting session at the start and finish, with your dog standing on the earth or concrete. Yep, you just added an easy ten minutes of grounding to your day as well as some extra bonding with your best friend. Even better? If you take your dog to a local dog park, or if you are lucky enough to have a yard of your own, play fetch and reward your dog with a nice long patting every time it brings the ball or toy back to you. You will be given spurts of grounded energy each time, while your dog gets needed exercise! Win-win!

The weather is getting unbearably cold for me—and here's what I do whenever it's too cold (or I'm too lazy) to exercise: I hit my local Y and sit in the sauna to reap benefits very similar to exercising, but without the hassle! Now this is a healing modality I can really get behind, because I love heat. It just feels intuitively right to get your blood flowing, and many medical studies prove that the benefit of sauna is enormous. And the bonus to a wintertime sauna practice is that it feels downright refreshing to do grounding outside afterward in the fresh winter air as you rehydrate and cool down. I highly recommend following up a ten- or fifteen-minute sauna session with a ten-minute grounding session outdoors while you drink a big bottle of water. Do this three times a week, and I promise you will feel the benefits.

Sauna increases blood circulation throughout your body—getting the blood pumping through your cardiovascular system, your muscles, your skin, your joints, your brain—so it delivers many of the same health benefits of exercise. So when the weather is too harsh outside, if you can find a local sauna, you can feel confident that you are still boosting your health and longevity even without hitting the treadmill. And multiple major medical studies back this up.[56] Sauna not only helps you live longer, but it also helps you avoid dementia and memory loss to enjoy that longer life more![57]

There are more reasons why sauna is so good for us. Sauna raises the whole body temperature, which activates metabolic changes like neutralizing inflammation, reducing oxidative stress, increasing nitric oxide bioavailability, increasing insulin sensitivity, and improving vasodilation. And raising the core body temperature and increasing the circulation are effects very similar to those produced by exercise. So increased time in the sauna helps increase vascular perfusion of the brain, increasing endothelial function (in the lining of your heart and blood vessels) and reducing inflammation throughout your body. So if you can't exercise (or, ahem, like me, don't particularly love to), then sauna is one good alternative. Sauna is also a good idea for disabled or mobility-limited folks who might find it harder to get outside to exercise. And often the folks that need exercise the most—like those recovering from cancer, or with metabolic and weight issues or high stress loads, or those who must sit for long periods of time at work, those caretaking others with very limited time away, those recovering from trauma, and so on—may find it harder to participate in regular exercise. One answer could be relaxing in a sauna to raise basal metabolic temperature.

Three times a week, all winter long I wake up and ask myself: *is it warm enough to ground outside in some way?* And if the answer is a resounding "no!" then I know where I'm headed—to my local YMCA, which has a sauna I can warm up in before cooling down grounded to the earth afterward. Ten minutes in the sauna and ten minutes grounded outside is one of the least expensive holistic therapies I know of—less expensive than a chiropractor, physical therapy, or acupuncture. Hitting my local sauna regularly throughout the winter, then stepping outside to ground as I cool down? That I can do. (Caution: Don't sauna if you have a

fever or an active inflammatory condition like a rash or hives or you are intoxicated.)

Winter Activity 14: Pairing Sauna with Grounding for Added Benefits

Materials: Sauna, water.

Method: The recommended routine is to sauna at least once a week and up to three times a week, for a period from five to twenty minutes. Hydrate before, during, and after sauna, and fully cool off by recovering for several minutes outside, grounded (either grounding barefoot, if it feels refreshing, or through your hands as discussed earlier if it is too cold for bare feet). Drink a full glass of water as you cool down while grounding.

Expanding Practices

In the winter, fire gazing is a lovely, nurturing way to feel the universe speak to you through nature. And I have two other ways for you to get grounded outside that are short and sweet—with winter's harsher temperatures, grounding sessions have to be very quick. Even if they last only a minute, they are worth it. Here's how:

Winter Activity 15: Fire Gazing

Fire gazing is a wonderful, contemplative practice any time; in the winter, the warm glow of a flame feels all the more nurturing and comforting. You can gaze at a fire in your fireplace or in a fire pit outside (and while you are out there and warm by the fire, be sure to slip your foot or hand onto the earth to get grounded). But perhaps most simple of all is using a candle. With your favorite candle—perhaps even one you made—find a comfortable spot to get grounded (see the

Heal section for ideas on how to ground in the winter). I find fire gazing to be a wonderful, centering, and deeply healing alternative to meditation. If you find meditation or breath work challenging, you may enjoy the practice of fire gazing instead.

Materials: Candle, matches, or lighter.

Methods: Sit comfortably in a dimly lit room (or outside at night) with your spine straight, either cross-legged with your hands resting on your knees or in a chair with your feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Light a candle, place it in front of you, centered comfortably, and simply focus your attention on the candle flame. Allow your mind and your breathing to calm and relax. Blink naturally and easily. Let your body become still. Your breath will automatically become lighter. During the meditation, the flame may seem to move three-dimensionally. Allow the journey. You may feel like you are floating out of your body. Just remember to keep your gaze on the light of the candle and relax, release, and receive. Feel the natural force of the fire in the flame in front of you, connected to and echoing the fire that is within your own heart center. Try to feel the fire within you synchronizing with the candle's flame. Notice how it dances and warms you. Feel it melt any coldness or hardness in your heart, feel it clearing the inner voice inside your throat, feel it centering your mind and bringing you internal peace. Meditate in this way from just a few minutes or up to thirty minutes (or longer) if you are enjoying this practice.

Winter Activity 16: Pay-It-Forward Chalk Messages

In the middle of a cold, grey, dark winter, let's spread some uplifting words of encouragement over the surface of this earth. Yep, I'm talking sidewalk chalk messages—a terrific way to pay it forward and spread a little cheer. Pick beautiful

bright colors and know that the entire time you are kneeling on a span of sidewalk, adding something beautiful to this world, you are grounding. Simply wear fingerless gloves or take turns slipping one hand at a time out of your mittens or gloves so you can make direct contact with the sidewalk.

Materials: Sidewalk chalk, sidewalk.

Methods: Anything you do with the chalk is wonderful. If quotes or messages are not your thing, fill a small section of sidewalk with hearts, sacred geometry spirals, smiley faces, or anything you feel drawn to doodle. If you would like some ideas for encouraging messages to leave, scan this list and see if any feel right for you to leave for someone to find today:

- Trust the journey.
- The world is filled with kind people. If you can't find one, be one.
- Actually, you can!
- You are enough.
- Head up, wings out.
- Inhale love, exhale gratitude.
- Breathe…you got this!
- Life is this moment now.
- There is light inside of you.
- The universe doesn't make mistakes…you belong.
- Let go of limiting beliefs.
- Anything is possible.
- You are a walking miracle. Strut accordingly.
- Enjoy today.
- Let go. Let God.
- You are awesome!
- You can do hard things.
- If you stumble, make it part of the dance.
- Collect moments, not things.

- No beauty shines brighter than a good heart.
- Embrace uncertainty.
- You are one of a kind.
- You are loved, no matter how you feel.
- If you want to fly, give up everything that weighs you down.
- If it doesn't open, it's not your door.
- You've got this!
- The glass isn't half empty or half full. The glass is refillable.

You can search the internet for short quotes and see if one of them feels like the right one to encourage someone with today.

Okay, let's face it: there are some days when you just don't have time to be creative with your grounding, and it's too cold to spend more than one solitary minute outside. That's okay. I encourage you to continue with your grounding practice daily, seeing it as critical as breathing, drinking water, sleeping, or any other daily routines that you do whether you really want to or not, because you know they are good for your body. To help you with your commitment to grounding, even on days when you have only sixty seconds to spare (which is perfect for a daily winter practice, as it's too cold to stay out much longer anyway!), turn your grounded minute into a spiritual prayer.

Winter Activity 17: One-Minute Grounded Prayer

Here is a starter prayer that I love doing; it takes me exactly one minute to do this from start to finish, so I thought it was the perfect short prayer to share with you. Of course, feel free to substitute absolutely any prayer that feels right to you in your heart. Anything that connects you with something larger than yourself is a good choice.

Materials: Bare hands, one minute outdoors.

Methods: Find a quiet place to touch the earth with a fingertip—a safe place where you can relax and close your eyes for a moment. Begin by taking three deep breaths. Then simply ask God, the universe, or any divine presence you prefer, to touch the center of your being. Take three more deep breaths to open to this connection. End with a prayer from your heart, asking for continued loving guidance and support, and expressing gratitude for your blessings. Then open your eyes and move forward into the rest of your day, ready to share this loving fortitude you have received with everyone you feel moved to connect with today.

Celebrating Practices

Every season we have plenty to celebrate with Mother Earth. In this section, I offer some ideas on how to take the party outdoors! In the winter, we have winter solstice and Yule to celebrate. A winter solstice celebration welcomes the return of the sun as the shortest day and longest night of the year draw to a close. I dislike cold so much that I can think of no better thing to celebrate in nature than the return of longer days and warmer temperatures, so this is one celebration I am sure never to miss. Here are some great ideas to throw a winter solstice party for all of your loved ones to join in—the more the merrier! No matter what other holiday parties your friends and family attend this holiday season, religious or otherwise, the return of the sun is a significant event that everyone can eagerly take a moment to be grateful for. Here are some ideas to get you started in planning your event, feel free to choose one, some, or all of these:

Winter Activity 18: Grounded Winter Party Ideas

Food: For winter solstice I always like to make a big pot of soup for dinner, simmering it all day long so the broth is nice and rich. To make your winter solstice party even easier, I

highly recommend that you ask everyone to bring a soup or stew to share and turn it into a potluck event. It's so fun to have lots of different bowls of soups and chilis to try, and as host all you need to do is provide some good breads and butter to enjoy with the soup. A sample menu might be:

Assortment of soups (potluck)

Warm rolls or freshly baked bread and butter

Warm spiced apple cider

Gingerbread for dessert

Apples and s'mores to roast over the fire

Ideally, this feast should be eaten by candlelight or firelight. If you are eating your meal indoors, eschew electricity on this darkest of days and enjoy dining by candlelight. A candlelight feast makes any setting beautiful; no other decorations needed.

Craft: Yule log. This is going to be the highlight of your party, a fun main event that everyone will enjoy working on together after dining by candlelight. The yule log is a tradition that dates back to medieval times (originally a Nordic tradition that spread throughout Scandinavia and Europe); it is a special log that was intended to be kept burning all night long to help inspire the return of the sun. To make a yule log, you will need to have these items collected for your party:

Materials: A large log of dried wood (traditionally pine or oak, but you can use any type of wood), cloth ribbon or twine (not synthetic ribbon), and decorative items that can safely burn (made from natural fibers, not synthetic materials), including:

- Greenery, such as holly, mistletoe, pine needles, ivy
- Pinecones
- Cinnamon sticks
- Dried berries

- Craft-store feathers
- Small notepads and writing utensils
- A hot glue gun to secure decorative items

Method: Wrap the log with ribbon many times around and tie to secure. Have guests slip branches, greenery, and cuttings under the ribbon. Glue pine cones, cinnamon sticks, and berries as desired (safely supervise children around a hot glue gun!). Have each guest take a slip of paper, write down a wish for the upcoming year on it, and then roll it up and tuck it under the ribbon or between branches or other decorative items. Proudly display this unique yule log for all your guests to contribute to until it is time to head outside for the bonfire!

Craft: Handcrafting beeswax candles. If you enjoyed this activity in the Creating Practices section of this chapter, have additional beeswax sheets out and guide guests through making their own candles. This is a beautiful party favor for all guests to leave with—a small symbolic light of their own, one they handcrafted in honor of the return of the sun. Refer to the candle making instructions in the Creating Practices section.

Activity: Burning sage. Winter solstice means the year is coming to an end and a new one is about to begin, so the next three suggestions focus on welcoming not only the return of the sunlight but also leaning forward into the growth and expansion of the year to come. To get started, I love the process of burning dried sage sticks, also known as smudging, to represent releasing old energy in order to make room for the new. This is a healing practice that is traditionally attributed to Native Americans, but as far back as ancient Egypt healers have used incense to cleanse and purify. I always particularly love when the priest at my church burns incense in a censer, walking up and down the isles with its heavenly scent.

Let my prayer be set before You as incense,

The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

—Psalms 141: 2

Have several smudge sticks out for guests to use to represent purifying their intentions for the new year. It's easy to find dried bundles of sage (called smudge sticks) at many holistic stores including yoga studios, herbalist shops, and natural food stores such as Whole Foods and Earth Fare. You can even create your own by grabbing a pack of fresh sage from the grocery store a few weeks before your party. Consider growing sage in the summer, then create your own smudge sticks: bundle and tie a few mature sprigs together, then hang upside down until fully dried. You can also make smudge sticks out of lavender, rosemary, or any other dried herbs you prefer (or a combination of two or more together.)

Materials: Smudge stick, lighter or long matches.

Methods: Light the end of the smudge stick by holding it over the flame of your lighter until it catches fire. Gently blow on the flame until it turns to an ember and smoke begins to rise. Moving the sage stick in front of you, use your other hand to waft the smoke over your body from head to toe. Your guests can take turns smudging each other as well, front and back. You may need to use the lighter to relight a smudge stick that has gone out. Be sure to extinguish the smudge stick when done by tamping it down on a bowl or cup, or simply running it under water.

Activity: Word of the Year. This is an activity I have been doing with friends and family members since I was in college. As each year draws to a close, with the new year just around the corner, I've picked a word of the year—one that captures the intention I would like to welcome into my life. It's fun to discuss potential words with your friends and loved ones, and it's really fun to hear what word each person settles on and why they selected it. Once you've picked your word, use

washable markers to write the word boldly on your skin, then invite your friends to do the same, displaying on each other the intention and blessing that your word brings with it.

Materials: Skin-safe washable markers.

Method: You may want to have a list of words printed out for your guests to consider and encourage discussion as you pass the list around the room and think about what word would be a meaningful mantra for this specific upcoming year. Here are some ideas:

Intentional, Focused, Brave, Surrender, Freedom, Peace, Love, Commitment, Connection, Gratitude, Faith, Hope, Contentment, Health, Growth, Possibility, Magic, Fearless, Simplify, Courage, Strength, Thrive, Flourish, Balance, Elevate, Grace, Blessing, Respect, Kindness, Deliberate, Playful, Fun, Joyful, Harmony, Relax, Bloom, Alignment, Enthusiasm, Flow, Family, Pause, Seek, Commit, Stillness, Compromise, Forgiveness, Shine, Sparkle…and on and on and on.

There are word-of-the-year generators online; you and your friends can have fun seeing what word is picked for you. Take turns sharing your word and (if you chose it) why you picked that particular word, and your hopes and dreams for this upcoming year. Then let everyone select a washable marker and write their word on their own body. It could be as simple as writing it across your wrist or ankle, or as elaborate as writing it across your abdomen or even across your forehead. Allow everyone to sign your word of the year on you, up and down your arms, legs, back, neck, face—wherever you are comfortable, knowing that every signed word from each of your friends adds to the overall prayer and intention of inviting this word into your life. It feels so good to see the cumulative support from all your loved ones echoing your word and honoring you with it. As it washes off your body in your next bath or shower, know that this intention continues to cover you like a loving embrace as you step fully

into the next year.

Bonfire and blessing (grounded, of course): After you've shared a candlelight meal together and crafted your yule log (and any other party activities you included), invite guests to join in one final beautiful bonfire, on this, the longest night of the year. Carry your yule log outside to burn it in an outdoor fire pit or another fire-safe space. Offer mugs of hot apple cider for guests to bring with them and have plenty of cozy blankets, quilts, or sleeping bags for them to bundle up in, so they are comfortable and warm enough to slip their fingers or toes out to touch the earth and get grounded while seated around the warmth of the fire. After getting a fire going strong, place your yule log in the fire and enjoy spending the beautiful celebratory time, grounded, with friends and family surrounding you. As the yule log burns, watch the log transform into light and carry the wishes your guests placed on it. Continue to talk about your hopes for joy and love and happiness and health over this upcoming year, taking turns to encourage each other as each shares intentions, praying support over each other if you are comfortable, or simply listening with supportive ears. Consider having apples and marshmallows for s'mores as a last snack for guests to roast on sticks over this glorious winter solstice fire. To close the evening, as the fire dies down but the yule log still burns, consider reading a blessing for everyone gathered together tonight to receive. You can search "winter blessing poetry" on the internet or write your own. Some key themes include gratitude, inner warmth, embracing darkness, welcoming the return of the sun, and appreciating loved ones.

Weekly Routines

Adopting a weekly routine can make grounding a daily healing practice. If you have the commitment to finding one way every single day to ground, no matter how briefly, you will have created a habit that supports your deepest level of well-being. In the winter, your grounding practice can be incredibly

variable, with short outdoor winter sessions lasting only minutes to indoor grounding sessions, with the help of a grounding stake, that may last hours (curled up with a good book?). Your weekly flow might look something like this:

Monday: Take a half-hour grounded nature walk to collect your favorite seasonal treasures.

Tuesday: Do an hour of indoor grounding through a grounding stake.

Wednesday: Take one minute for outdoor grounded prayer or meditation.

Thursday: Spend a half hour in grounding meditation while in a basement, garage, or sheltered canopy or tent.

Friday: Enjoy a half hour of grounding during massage.

Saturday: Spend an hour of grounding while writing chalk messages on sidewalks.

Sunday: End the week by grounding around the warmth of an outdoor fire.

Add a few grounding exercises, make some grounding stakes to use indoors and to gift to others this winter season, enjoy a lovely winter solstice celebration that incorporates grounding by fireside, and you are all set to truly nurture your body all winter long and appreciate emerging into spring at an entirely new level of wellness.

Next up? The gorgeous world begins to wake up around us as we head into springtime. It’s absolutely, hands-down, the most exciting time to head outside and get grounded, so it’s probably the easiest season of the year to cultivate your daily grounding practice. I’ll tell you how in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7:

Spring Blooms with Your Fresh Vibrancy

One spring day, after my high school classes ended for the day, I was spending a few extra minutes chatting with my best friend Kristin before heading home, and out of nowhere it began to pour. Not just rain; I'm talking a torrential sheet of water from the sky. It was so heavy it would not have been wise to drive home, so my friend and I—both already soaked—decided to just surrender to it. The ditches around the soccer field where we were parked were completely flooded, creating a river churning around the field in all directions. I tossed off my shoes and went for it. With water rushing all the way up to my knees, I abandoned myself to playing in puddles like a little kid again. We ran and slid and dived into the ditches every which way, and I'll never forget how I laughed so hard and felt so free.

In that one spring afternoon, I peeled off an entire winter of darkness and cold and all the stress of school midterms and college applications and whether the boy I liked even knew I existed. It was a bold move, because we looked ridiculous, with hair worse than a drowning cat, makeup washed away, in wet clothes, screaming ridiculous yelps of joy. I was the exact opposite of cool—yet I no longer cared. I felt so fully refreshed inside and out that I wouldn't have traded that moment for anything, even if every student in that high school had been watching us and laughing.

This is the movement and feeling behind spring: a complete shedding of the old, an inner awakening, an outer expansion. It's a feeling of joyful anticipation, of possibility unfolding before your eyes, and of being an integral part of it. Spring urges us to join in. It's not passive. Spring encourages you to say "screw it" and kick off your shoes and dive into the muddy ditches, even if you make a spectacle of yourself.

Spring gives us opportunity upon opportunity to cast off the old and embrace forward movement in our lives, echoing the world around us. Nurturing seeds to sprout, tending to flowers that bloom, dancing in the rain, eating outside again (finally!), and trading boots for flip-flops that can easily be kicked off at a moment's notice. Don't just watch the earth wake up; join in the awakening. In this chapter, I share lots of wonderful ways to ground your body this spring so you feel connected to the energy of the planet you live on. You'll feel your physical body and your health blooming, growing, expanding, and awakening, too.

Nurturing Practices

In spring, the healthy routines that nurture your body particularly well through grounding include grounding directly through the (at last!) warming soil, regularly eating outside while grounded, and going on a weekly nature walk.

Spring Activity 1: Grounding Through the Soil

We've talked plenty about grounding through green grass and sandy beaches and rivers and lakes and concrete and rocks and concrete and trees, but my favorite one of all? Dirt. Getting right into the richness of the soil. When my kids were little, I dug up a part of our backyard and removed the top layer of grass so they could run a hose into the dirt and make a mud pit and roll around in it like adorable piglets. Today, spend twenty minutes digging your bare toes into the top layer of the earth—whether it's dirt, soil, clay or sand, let yourself get messy and see how that feels. Or, if you prefer, run your fingers through the soil instead of your toes. Find the safe places in your world where you can get your hands into the earth.

Materials: Access to dirt or soil outside—whether at a park, one step off the sidewalk at work, or your own garden bed.

Method: Find a patch of dirt to stand on, sit on, work with.

Lucky you, if you already have a garden—simply spend some time today weeding it and tending to its needs as the earth tends to yours. If you have a bit of land or a yard but no garden, just spend a few minutes digging up a small patch of earth—take a trowel, sit on the earth, and have fun. Unleash your inner child (or have your actual children help show you the way!) and dig up a bit of lawn or play in the mud, scoop by scoop. See what you find. Do a mini excavation. Just save the divot to put back into place when you are done! If you have no outdoor landscaping, bring your houseplants outside wherever there's a patio or bare dirt, where you can get as messy as you want and spend some time adding a layer of potting soil to their container or repotting them into bigger planters.

Feel how natural it is to get dirty, and do your best to drop any resistance to feeling the dirt on your skin. Really know in your heart that living in contact with the dirt of the earth—the earth from which all food and indeed all life depends—is natural. The old adage "dirty enough to be happy but clean enough to be healthy" could very well be turned around to say "dirty enough to be healthy but clean enough to be happy." In other words, getting clean is optional. Having a fresh outfit is a simple pleasure that comes as a treat. Bathing is a luxurious ritual at the end of a beautiful, health-filled day of connection, healing, and growth. But connecting to the earth is not optional. We absolutely need to connect to the earth to be healthy. Getting dirty enough each day to actually need to bathe in the evening should be a daily health goal.

Spring Activity 2: Eating Outside, Grounded

Recall that grounding affects your metabolism and weight—yes, grounding can help you find a healthy weight and stabilize you there. Out of all of the wonderful health benefits of grounding that we've talked about, this might be my

favorite wellness boost of all, because as our metabolic function as a whole changes and shifts when we connect to the planet, we can see the interplay of the earth's support and our entire body's response. After all, I believe that weight is just the body's attempt to ground itself. Folks who are very open energetically (empaths) are one example—sometimes the body tries to use weight to ground and shield itself from the draining effects of other people's energy. But it isn't healthy to manage energy in this way over the long term. You can support your well-being by eating outdoors, as we were meant to, instead of your body's trying to build up enough mass to ground your soul energy.

Fasting, yoga, meditation, supplements, raw foods, dieting, exercise—all other healing modalities that we try to impact our weight won't actually ground the body. If you are not touching the earth daily, you are not truly grounded. Connect to the earth. Weight tends to fall away (if you want it to) as you become a vessel of conductive energy flow and not a container accruing mass. You don't want to be the final destination of energy—after all, you are not a dead end; you are an avenue for expression and life! I see this all the time with energy healers and empaths who take on weight in order to buffer the intense energy of others. Grounding profoundly affects weight over time. Often, grounding was the missing piece.

Combining the metabolic boosting support from the earth with eating a meal outside while grounded is win-win. Spring invites you to start taking your meals outside to eat. It can be as simple as bringing your morning cup of coffee and toast outside to enjoy it sitting on your front doorstep, to a bag lunch eaten outside during your work day, or as elaborate as a beautiful picnic dinner with your entire family sitting together outside, enjoying the sunset. And take notice of how it feels to have your body directly supported energetically by the earth while you put food into it to also nutritionally support your body. Your digestive system will be calm, receptive to

the nutrients you are consuming, and more effectively able to metabolically respond, with less inflammation and irritation throughout it all.

Materials: Food and beverage, an accessible place to eat outside, a picnic blanket (optional).

Method: Once a week throughout the springtime, take advantage of the beautiful warmer weather before it gets too buggy and hot, and plan a meal to be eaten outside.

Take your coffee or tea and yogurt outside for an early morning way to start the day right! Or take your lunch outside on your lunch break and eat sitting on a park bench or on the edge of the sidewalk, slipping off your shoes. Or better yet, grab the entire family for a nice picnic dinner outside! If you have a local park you can meet up with loved ones for a potluck meal once every weekend, sharing dishes and catching up on the events of the week. Or simply spread out a picnic blanket and have a bit of solitude while you eat alone—that is magical as well. Drink lots of water to be sure you are nice and hydrated, and enjoy eating while grounded outdoors. Notice how much more connected you feel to the tastes and smells and pleasures of eating your food. Feel the food in your hands, sense the food on your lips, savor each bite deeply, and enjoy the pleasure of filling your stomach. Feel how warm and receptive your digestion is to the food you are enjoying. Feel how easy it is to tell when you are full and to sense when you want to stop eating. Feel how lovely it is to hydrate when you are outside, how much more refreshing drinks feel as they pour down your throat.

Make this a weekly routine, or better yet, a daily habit for at least one of your meals throughout the entire spring.

Spring Activity 3: Going on a Nature Hunt, Grounded

I highly recommend starting each week with a barefoot grounded walk outside to collect seasonal items to update your table. Each week, replace items with fresh ones you find! In the spring, when the earth bursts forth with budding and blossoming treasures, it's so easy to fill your home up with beautiful treats from the earth. From budding flowers to fresh new leaves to the reopening of your favorite farmers market to the start of berry picking season at your local U-pick farm, there are endless ways to spend some time in nature and use that healing practice to further enhance the natural beauty of your living space. And as I've noted earlier, every time you walk by a nature-inspired collection in your home it will remind you to ask yourself if you have gone outside and grounded today.

Materials: Thirty minutes of time to walk barefoot.

Method: Walk around with an open mind and an open heart, looking for small treasures in nature to appreciate. Springtime collections might include wildflowers, berries, fresh grasses and dandelions, clovers, or empty snail shells. You could dedicate a small area of your home to update weekly with these seasonally appropriate found treasures. Also, consider keeping a running list of spring insect and animal sightings as they return to the world around you: birds, butterflies, rabbits, deer, frogs, fish, ladybugs, fireflies, and so on. Year after year, it's fun to note the timing of arrivals.

Healing Practices

My spring suggestions for health and healing are predictable: growing living plants in the earth is a wonderful season-long project that will get you outside almost daily, with huge rewards to your wellness and health, even if you don't plant edibles. Together, let's figure out some way for you to grow something—whether it is a simple windowsill container or a yard full of garden beds, every moment you spend with your hands touching the earth

serves to enhance your own vibrancy every bit as much as the land you are tending to.

Spring Activity 4: Gardening

The topic of organic gardening is so immense I can't possibly cover it all in one section of one chapter of this book. But as much as there is to say about planting seasons, soil types, plant hardiness zones, frequency of watering and fertilizing, thinning seedlings, weeding, pest control, and so much more, the important thing is just to start. Even with no planning and no research, all I truly want for you is to enjoy getting your hands in the soil. The outcome doesn't even matter as much as the grounding itself. So there is no pressure to produce an edible or admirable end result. Just get started! Gardening is every bit as relaxing as it is fun, and honestly, you don't need anything more than a small bag of organic planting mix or potting soil and a packet of heirloom seeds. Heirloom seeds are the best because they have not been genetically modified or hybridized in any way, so every seed that the mature plant produces will produce another plant exactly like the parent plant. That means you can collect their seeds, dry them, and replant them indefinitely year after year after year, without ever buying seeds again, just from that first packet.

Scan this list of unique garden ideas to get a feel for what interests and excites you to grow, and consider your living space as well. If you're living in an apartment or townhome, you may have a sunny window where you can place a small windowsill herb garden; you may have a porch, rooftop, or balcony where you can place larger containers for a small fruit and veggie garden; or you may even have the option to join a community garden in your neighborhood. If you have a yard, whether small or large, you can carve out a part of it to grow anything from a small flower garden to a large vegetable garden to replacing every inch of the grass and landscaping with edible plants, bushes, and trees. Plants

native to your region are easier-care, and they attract and support the widest assortment of birds, insects, and other critters, and help make up for wild habitat lost to human development. Dream big, but get started, even if it's just one plant this time around.

Windowsill garden: For a windowsill garden, have fun selecting easy-to-grow herbs such as basil, thyme, and oregano, or plant a row of cactus and succulents. A row of lettuce and spinach can grow quite well on a partly sunny windowsill. There are also great windowsill flowers that are compact enough, such as geraniums and African violets. Remember that grounding stake you made in the winter? Now you can repurpose it for spring. With the grounding stake anchored in the earth outside, run the grounding cord inside and push the end of the grounding cord (with the alligator clip) into the soil of your potted plant, and your potted plant is grounded just as it would be if it were growing outside. Any time you touch the soil or the plant in any way, you are grounded too.

Porch garden: As with a windowsill garden, you'll want to run a grounding cord up to your porch if at all possible, so that your porch plants grow grounded and you will be grounded, too, whenever you are tending to your garden. But with a porch you have even more options to expand your garden, because almost anything you can dream to grow in a garden can be grown in containers as well. Some classic, easy-to-grow container garden plants include bush beans, carrots, cucumbers, dwarf lemon trees, kale, lettuce, spinach, strawberries, and tomatoes.

Butterfly/bee garden: If you have a little space in a yard, your options expand even further. Feel drawn to growing flowers? You will be helping to give the pollinators that we depend on for the success of our ecosystem a place to nourish and thrive, which is awesome. Pick some plants that attract your favorite pollinators like butterflies and bees —plants that are nectar and pollen rich. such as alyssum,

alstroemeria, aster, bee balm, coneflower, daisy, foxglove, heliotrope, hyacinth, lavender, marigold, phlox, and zinnia. If you have space for plants that butterfly larvae feed on, milkweed and fennel are host plants for several species. Adding a small dish of water or a birdbath supports your pollinators as well, as every living thing needs water too.

Herb garden: If you have yard space you can have a full herb garden—especially wonderful for folks who like to cook, as it's hard to beat adding fresh herbs to your dishes. Walking through an herb garden (barefoot, of course) rubbing the leaves of the different plants between your fingers and smelling the different savory and sweet scents is a heavenly experience. The options are endless, but a good starting point might be any of these: basil, chives, cilantro, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme.

Medicinal garden: Another fun theme for a garden is to select plants that have medicinal uses. Most herbs with healing properties are also lovely to look at, with beautiful blooms that are so gorgeous no one will know that your garden is pulling double duty as an apothecary! Some great starter medicinal plants are aloe vera, arnica, calendula, chamomile, echinacea, lavender, lemon balm, St. John's wort, tea tree, and valerian.

Fragrance garden: If you are like my daughter and your favorite sensory organ is your nose, you may get excited about the idea of planting a fragrance garden. Although any flower whose scent you enjoy would count, some classic fragrances to consider include gardenia, honeysuckle, jasmine, lilac, lily-of-the-valley, sweet alyssum, sweet pea, and of course the classic favorite, rose.

Food-themed garden: Here is a great garden theme, especially if you have children who love to help cook. Getting kids involved in garden-to-table food production

teaches them valuable lessons about how much work and resources go into creating food, and how precious it is to have something to eat. You can choose any type of food-based theme, here are a few examples to get you started:

- A burrito garden: cilantro, cumin, black beans, onions, hot chili peppers, lettuce, tomatoes.
- A snack garden (foods to pick and eat as you walk through): cherry tomatoes, sugar snap peas, carrots, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries.
- A pizza garden: tomatoes, basil, oregano, onion, peppers, garlic.
- A salad garden: kale, lettuce, spinach, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, endive, radishes.

Tea garden: There are few pleasures more simple and more satisfying than picking a few leaves or flowers from your garden and pouring hot water over them, steeping them, and then sipping your own homemade tea. I started growing mint in a container many years ago, and I have taken that one container with me every single time I have moved, because there is something so comforting to me about knowing that even if the world was going mad I could always make my own hot tea at any time. A tea garden is just as easy to grow as an herb garden, even though you don't hear as much about it. Some easy-to-grow plants for tea include chamomile, hibiscus, lavender, lemon grass, lemon verbena, peppermint, chocolate mint, spearmint, rose hips, and stevia.

Centering Practices

For spring, the following guided healing meditation brings the deep awakening of a sprouting seed and the joyful expansion of blossoming blooms into every cell of your being.

Spring Activity 5: Healing Meditation: Awakening to Bloom

Method: Grounded in your chosen position, read through the meditation (or listen to it at http: //www.newharbinger.com/44895). Once you have read through it or listened a few times, you can guide yourself on your own any time.

Lying comfortably outside on the ground, perhaps on a blanket or beach towel, allow a fingertip or the heel of your foot to drift over the edge of the blanket to touch the earth directly, grounding your body.

Take several slow, deep breaths in, and slowly exhale them out. Close your eyes and center your awareness in your abdomen, in the center of your solar plexus (about in the center of your midriff). Feel down into the center of your very being, your internal core. Just as a seed contains the entire plant within it, including the blossom and fruit of the mature tree it will become, so do you have a core that contains every potential life path within you.

You have the potential for growth in endless different ways by simply allowing the seed of life in your core to become rooted and expand. Find that center core. Find that seed that lies waiting to grow today. Do you feel a desire that you would like to plant, nurture, and grow to fruition this year? If so, focus on this desire within you, name the seed of this desire, and call it forth as we cultivate the expansion of this seed throughout this meditation.

Feel the seed you selected to grow within your core spark to life with the urge to expand. This seed is embedded in the fertile soil of your body, and your soul energy is pouring through it, urging its expansion and growth. Bursting with life force and inspiration, the seed of your desire feels safe enough to begin to crack open. Feel the tender roots begin to reach outward, anchoring the seed firmly in place in your

core.

Feel the strength of these roots as they expand and grow with each breath, deeply securing a strong foundation for your inner growth to expand outward into manifestation in this world. You are stable and resilient and endlessly expansive. Your desire bursting forth has no need for the shell around the seed any longer, and it falls away. With strong roots, your seed completely uncurls and sends up the first leaves in unison with your roots growing down. The leaves feel so new and fresh and free, they continue to stretch and grow upward in freedom and possibility.

Enjoy this beautiful feeling of reaching upward and out in all directions, as the roots continue to spiral down through you and into the earth below and the seedling in your core unfurls upward, growing higher and higher and higher. You feel an awakening you have never felt before, a powerful and impressive expansion that only increases your energy and excitement.

You feel the stem of your seedling growing stronger, getting taller, growing thicker and more mature. Thriving in the open air and sunlight and carrying your soul spark up through the stem and out through the leaves, the stem begins branching off in as many different directions as it needs to fully expand, saturating every single leaf with nurturing sunlight. Branches reach up and out, growing taller with every breath.

The plant you are growing from your core is thriving in every sense of the word. It is so strong, galvanized with your soul energy and pouring forth expressive energy, buds can’t help but appear all over the branches. It feels so good to feel the strong urge to bloom. Each bud is filled with potential, and each bud yearns to open. Filled with your soul energy, each bud is bringing your soul gifts and desires up into the light to be seen. When they can’t wait another minute, the buds begin to blossom with fragrance

and color. Flowers burst forth over all of the branches, with petals unfolding and spinning out in all directions.

See each flower, see the color, feel the softness and sense the excitement while taking several deep slow breaths in, smelling the heavenly scent. You have manifested beauty and joy in this world. You have unlimited creative potential. Life cannot help but pour through you and out of you.

Take time to allow the flowers to mature, to grow mature seeds within the center of each one. As you rest in knowing the seeds of your desire are joyfully manifested as an entire blossoming tree within you, you can feel the excitement build within the center of each flower now. Each flower contains seeds that hold more complete plants within them as well. There is no end to the cycle of desire and expression that you can repeat over and over again. You have put your unique soul energy forth in a cycle that will never end, only expanding outward further and further and further.

You can fully relax, knowing you are a perennial that will express and manifest desires again and again and again. You will always have a seed to harvest, to plant in your deepest core and allow to unfold into vibrant full expression. And within that expression will blossom forth many more seeds of desire. Collect the seeds as they mature, and place them collectively in the core of your solar plexus, knowing that when you feel the internal pull to plant and grow another seed within you, you can repeat this process over and over and over again without end.

Take several deep breaths again, as you hold a nurturing space for these seeds to blossom forth when their spring has come. Feel the satisfying feeling of bringing something to fruition and holding a sacred space for the potential of your next desire. Know that there are endless supplies of seeds and equally endless ways to manifest and grow them. When you feel ready, open your eyes and stretch

your arms overhead, taking a final deep cleansing breath and feeling fully renewed and aware of all of the power that is planted within your core. You feel richer and more expanded than before beginning this meditation. You feel grounded and full of potential at the same time.

This is the power of spring. As you go about your day today, keep your eyes open to see the world waking up and manifesting all around you, knowing you have the power to continually do this in your own life as well. Planting any seed of desire in the rich soil of your core and feeding it with your soul energy, your future can't help but unfold and manifest in a way that is a true expression of you.

Creating Practices

Spring truly personifies the expression of inner creativity while soaking in the support from the earth! There are endless opportunities to get messy and creative outside in a garden or with plants, so even if you are not an avid gardener, this spring you might consider becoming one! It's so much more than a fun way to get grounded—with this invaluable practice you'll experience the richness of life cycles, germination, annuals versus perennials, how to care for plants, watering and fertilizing, bug identification, how to collect heirloom seeds and the importance of heirloom seeds versus hybrid seeds, composting, cooking and nutrition from the fruits of your labor, canning, and more! Doing it all barefoot? Priceless.

Spring Activity 6: Seed Collecting

If you enjoy gardening, you'll take twice as much pride and twice as much pleasure in planting seeds that you've saved from your own garden. Propagating your own garden from your own seeds means you basically have a free garden, assuming that you use your own compost for fertilizer. So, if you see your lettuce bolt or discover an extra cucumber or two that is past its prime, you can turn these into a positive by saving the mature seeds inside. And beyond being able to

continue to perpetuate and replant your seeds, if you use compost you've created to fertilize your soil, you literally are providing free, healthy, organic food for your family. That feels sooooo good. Another great reason to know how to save seeds is so that if called on to rely on local resources, you would know how to grow and propagate your own food source. Plus, it is eco-friendly, cutting down on the need to rely on (read: consume) having seeds mailed to you, decreasing packaging and transportation consumption. Most folks who save seeds do it for all three reasons, and you can too.

Materials: Mature garden plants, cool dark place to let seeds dry out (any closet works).

Methods: Here is where you will be so glad you invested in using heirloom-quality seeds, because heirloom seeds means that they are pure seeds, not hybrids, and non-GMO. Meaning you can take the seeds from the parent plant, replant them, and you will grow the exact same plant in the next generation. If you use hybrid or GMO seeds, because two or more plants were crossed to produce that product, the seeds they produce may give you one parent plant or the other or some variation in between.

To save seeds, all you need to do is select a plant or two of each crop that you are going to allow to mature fully, and let them bolt. This means you allow the plant to live out its life cycle—to mature and produce flower heads of fully ripened fruits that are full of seeds. Then you harvest those seeds and let them dry for a few weeks before storing them in airtight containers and using them in the next growing season. If you save your favorite seeds each year, this will free up your budget to try out new heirloom seeds that you might have otherwise passed over. Keep your favorites going year after year, and add one or two new fun things to try. Here are the guidelines for a few common garden plants, and you'll soon see that the process for each is basically the same:

Watermelon. Easiest seeds ever to harvest. Simply select a nice ripe melon, enjoy eating it, and pick out the most plump, black seeds (discarding any thin seeds and any immature white seeds). Line a cookie sheet with paper towels and spread the seeds out to dry. Allow to dry for about two weeks, flipping them once or twice. Once they are completely dry, store in an airtight container.

Cucumber. This one is the second easiest. Just allow one or two fruits to go all the way past the eating stage to the fully ripe, huge yellow cucumber stage. If you are like me, you'll do this accidentally anyway, as I always find one hidden that's already turned yellow. Allowing the fruit to fully ripen will tell the vine to stop producing fruit, so do this only to a vine near the end of the growing season. Find the largest, fattest seeds, rinse them off, and let them dry on a cookie sheet lined with paper towels for about three weeks, turning them once or twice. Once they are completely dry, store in an airtight container.

Corn. Again, so easy. Allow the ears to fully mature and even dry right on the stalk, or pick the mature ears off and remove the husk (to prevent mold) and allow the seeds to dry right on the cob on a dark, cool shelf somewhere. Once the are dry, use your thumb to shell the kernels right off the cob. After you get a few off, the rest just pop off right on down the line. Spread these out on a cookie sheet. Continue to allow them to dry for another two weeks or so, then store.

Tomatoes. Let several tomatoes fully ripen on the vine to a deep rich color. Harvest the seeds by placing them and the gelatinous pulp in a bowl of water, and let it sit overnight. The next day, the seeds will have sunk to the bottom and the pulp will float. Allow the seeds to dry on a cloth or paper towels for a few days, then transfer them to a cookie sheet for another week or two. Once they are fully dry, store in an airtight container.

Greens (lettuce, spinach, kale, herbs). Allow the plants you would like to harvest to bolt. This is easy for me, because I always have several plants that start to bolt right in front of my eyes, despite my best efforts to keep up with harvesting. Whenever you find a plant that has bolted or you discover an overripe tomato, cucumber, or melon hidden in your garden, you are already halfway to having the seeds for your next garden! Just scoop them up and harvest. For greens, watch the plants that are bolting—after the flowers turn to seed heads, just snip the heads and lay them out to dry. Once dry, rub the seeds from the husks into a pan, dry for another week or so in the pan, then transfer to an airtight container to store.

Carrots and onions. These biennial plants take two years to develop seeds. This is even easier, because you can do nothing but let a few mature plants winter over in place in the garden and wait for them to bolt the following year. If you live in a very cold zone, just layer mulch on top of the plants to protect them during the winter. Next year, allow the plants to shoot up a flowering stalk, and watch for the seed heads to form. Process as with the greens seeds. I save each seed type (and my mixed lettuce seeds) in marked envelopes and then fold all the envelopes up into one large quart sized airtight glass canning jar to save for use the next year.

Spring Activity 7: Bird Identification

Spring is a magical time to go bird watching, as they are very active in choosing territories, nesting, and raising chicks. If you have a bird feeder or bird bath to observe, you can find birds with very little effort. Dawn and dusk are great times for bird watching, as birds tend to be more active just after sunrise and just before sunset. As you get more and more into birding, you may find a whole new world out there waiting for you as you feel the victory of sighting a bird you

have waited patiently to see, plan out-of-state trips trying to track down rare birds that are not local to you, or join up with local birding clubs to make like-minded new friends.

Materials: Binoculars (optional, but they really make all the difference; start with a light, inexpensive pair with good optics), camera (optional), bird reference guides, journal.

Methods: Head outside to bird watch in the first two hours after sunrise, or just before sunset. If you have a bird feeder to observe, settle in outdoors grounded nearby. Many folks like to document the birds they see by taking a picture or keeping a running list in a journal. Be as quiet as possible; birds scare easily and will leave before you've had a chance to identify them. Likewise, avoid sudden movements that will scare off your birds. Be patient, as there are usually many more birds in an area than you think there are! When you've been quiet a while, they gain confidence and go about their business.

Spring Activity 8: Insect Identification

I love this one—keep a good bug reference book and a magnifying glass nearby and go on a grounded bug hunt! Not only is this wonderful fun each spring, but if you think you hate bugs, this practice will help you not to be scared of the wild natural world.

Materials: Insect reference book, journal

Methods: Walk barefoot outdoors as often as possible through the spring, and keep a running list of bugs you see. It's smart to know which insects are unusual and uncommon so you can be careful around them and look them up to know more. Everyone should know what black widow and brown recluse spiders look like, for example, and how to differentiate them from their harmless (and beneficial!) spider cousins, like a daddy long legs or a house spider. It's also a

great idea to know what a tick looks like and what to do if you find one (see chapter 8 for more on this).

Spring Activity 9: Register Your Space as a Certified Wildlife Refuge

It's easier than you think to turn any land or yard you care for into a wildlife habitat. There are four components:

- Your habitat should provide three forms of food for wildlife—it can be as simple as hanging a birdfeeder, a hummingbird feeder, and a squirrel feeder, but trees and garden plants that produce nectar, seeds, and fruit all count as well.
- Your habitat needs one clean water source, such as a birdbath or butterfly puddling area.
- Your habitat needs two places for wildlife to find shelter and similarly, two places for them to raise their young, such as a nesting box, bird house, evergreens or mature trees; even a pile of rocks or shrubs counts.
- You must tend to your area using sustainable practices, such as mulching, using an irrigation hose or rain water, growing native plants, composting, and eliminating chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Then fill out an online form describing your space and submit a small application fee to become certified by the National Wildlife Federation. (Many states have their own certification program; you can do both!) As NWF encourages on their website: "Anyone can create a welcoming haven for local wildlife. Turning your yard, balcony container garden, schoolyard, work landscape, or roadside greenspace into a Certified Wildlife Habitat® is fun, easy, and can make a lasting difference for wildlife." You can also purchase a sign to let neighbors know you are supporting wildlife. Welcome questions, and share your experience to encourage them to

do the same!

Moving Practices

In the spring, it's easy to find ways to get moving outdoors in ways that will get your blood circulating and give your conductive health a boost. We have Earth Day, and there are many awesome activities that allow us to get moving and grounded on this beautiful planet of ours, while celebrating and caring for our earthly home. Here are a few of my favorites to get you started.

It's awe-inspiring to realize that the earth gives us everything tangible that we need to survive. And she does so very generously. Growing trees that pour out oxygen into the atmosphere; growing food; water flowing through a beautiful regenerative cycle; and a physical anchor for our homes, our cars, our work spaces, even for our own two feet to rest. Providing habitats for wildlife, exotic places to explore, daily displays of grandeur that break through our routine and remind us we are part of something much bigger here: things as common as the sunrise and sunset, a rainbow, a snowflake; sights as breathtaking as the northern lights, the peaks of mountain tops, the beautiful valleys in between, the depths of canyons. A great commitment to make on Earth Day, this year and every year, is to spend an afternoon picking up litter in your spot on this world.

Spring Activity 10: Litter Pickup

From your local sidewalk, park, town square, or neighborhood, head out to make this world a safer place in which to walk barefoot. Supplied with a biodegradable trash bag and some protective gloves (if desired), pick up all the plastic bottles, cigarette butts, food wrappers, foam cups, glass bottles, and aluminum cans that litter a typical roadside. With microplastic debris (the result of plastic litter breaking up in our oceans over time) being found in every corner of the world—even in Antarctica's water samples—every piece of litter you pick up is a piece that you stop from

entering our oceans and, ultimately, our food chain.

Materials: A biodegradable trash bag, rubber gloves (optional).

Method: Spend any time you can—even ten minutes counts—walking around your yard, your neighborhood sidewalks, your local park, the exterior of your work place, or anywhere else you find yourself today, with an eye out for garbage that you can pick up and safely dispose of or recycle. This is something you can do year round but is particularly important to do in the spring to prep your grounding spaces for safely going barefoot all spring and summer long. Challenge yourself to find one dozen, then two dozen, then three dozen items each time you go litter hunting.

Spring Activity 11: Rain Dance

It's hard to fully surrender to dancing in the rain; feeling your hair and clothes get wet brings up immediate feelings of embarrassment and an urge to run inside and avoid getting wet at all costs, because of the conditioning we've been told over the years. But watch a young child. Watch a toddler gaze up at the sky in wonder and delight when it starts to rain. They have an immediate and natural urge to stretch their hands out, to tilt their head upward to greet the rain, to start laughing and twirling, to seek out puddles to jump in. It's very natural for human beings to feel immense joy and freedom well up inside of us when it rains, as the earth's soils are quenched and spring plants get a boost of life-giving hydration. Rain is a relief and a promise that the cycle of life continues, and that spring seedlings will ultimately lead to plants and food sources that nurture us and the animals that share the earth with us. If we can let down our guard and surrender to the joy of rain, even abandon ourselves to it, we can receive a deep healing on many levels. We feel

intimately connected to the earth when we playfully allow ourselves to get as soaked as the ground around us; even better, the moisture on our bare feet ensures that our conductive contact to the earth is strong. Every moment you stand on the earth barefoot in the falling rain is a moment you are powerfully grounded.

Materials: Rain, towel.

Method: Caution: do not go outside during thunderstorms. You do not want to be outdoors connected to the earth if there is any possibility of a lightning strike. But during spring, there are lots of light rainfalls that beckon you to join in the fun outside. Forgo the umbrella and let the warm rain run over you. Play, dance, run, wander, or just stand there, listening to it all…you can't do it wrong if you simply kick off your shoes and connect to the earth and let your movements and curiosity take over. After you are done, head inside to wrap in a towel, change into dry clothes, and make a cup of tea! You've just fully nourished your body inside and out, combining play, movement, grounding, and water together in one healing session. You may come to enjoy being grounded and dancing in the rain so much that every time it starts to sprinkle, you see it as free therapy waiting for you outside!

Spring Activity 12: Berry Picking

In the spring, U-pick farms start offering fresh strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and more (depending on your growing region), just waiting to be picked by you and enjoyed. One weekend this season, find a local U-pick farm and go berry picking. Slip off your shoes while you are picking your treasures, or simply know that every time you touch a leaf or a berry as you pick it, you are grounding right through your hands. Once you have your haul, head home, and be sure to include fresh berries in as many meals and

snacks as possible (and fill up your freezer with bags full), because there are so many amazing health benefits to berries. They have been found to protect against age-related brain changes,58 decrease heart disease,59 decrease inflammation in the digestive tract, protect eye health, decrease risk of metabolic syndrome,60 and provide cancer-preventive benefits.61

Materials: U-pick berry farm.

Method: Spend an afternoon at your favorite U-pick farm, collecting your favorite berries (barefoot, of course). Spend at least thirty minutes grounded while you pick berries to enjoy all season long. Once you are home, rinse them, and eat daily; refrigerate or freeze whatever you don't eat right away, as these are delicate fruits. Just consuming a small amount of berries daily can hugely benefit your body's ability to age well, decrease your lifetime cancer and heart attack risk, and boost your brain resiliency! So start off the day with berries as toppings for waffles, pancakes, yogurt, or oatmeal, or add them to muffins and baked goods. Eat berries midday by adding a sprinkling of fresh berries to your salad several times a week. End the day with berries by eating a half a cup of berries for dessert, or top your favorite pudding with berries, or make a berry parfait with yogurt and organic whipped cream. Or blend berries with a little water in your blender to make a fresh berry syrup to drizzle on top of ice cream and other desserts. And don't forget to drink your berries as well! If you were able to pick enough berries to store in the freezer, you can keep bags of your favorite frozen berries on hand year round to add to smoothies and shakes.

Spring Activity 13: Fall in Love with the Earth

Spring is about falling in love, courtship, and connecting. You see it in the way birds build nests together, the way squirrels

flirt and play together, in the dance of the bees, and the flowers that bloom. Today I want you to fall in love with the earth. There are so many different lovely ecosystems on our amazing planet, so take a little bit of time to consider: what is your favorite? What draws you closer to feeling interconnected with the planet, with the energy and movement of the universe that expresses itself in the spring? What space on this earth allows you to hear the whisper of something larger in your heart? Is it the beach? The mountains? A particular stretch of suburban sidewalk? Is it your community garden? Your favorite park? Is it watching a waterfall? Watching a sunset? Standing on the side of a river? Standing on the sand of an ocean shore? Ask yourself: where do you feel most connected to your planet? Then, with this in mind, go outside this spring and explore your terrain, and find exactly where it is that your heart song sings loudest. Fall in love. Explore. Spring is the time.

Materials: Varies—your location may be right outside your front doorstep, or you may need to bike, drive, or even fly to get to it.

Method: Your only goal is to find where you fall in love with Mother Earth most easily. Everyone has a preference for what they find most beautiful about our planet. Get outside, exploring and loving our earth.

The world is so full of beauty and presents itself to us in so many abundant ways—from field to forest to mountain to beach—that it's worth figuring out which makes you feel most connected to our planet. The more connected and in love with our earth that you feel, the more inspired you will be to treat her well, conserving and recycling and reducing your carbon footprint, and the more you will desire to connect outside, grounding and healing your body with the planet's strength. It's worth planning trips, excursions, and vacations around what topography speaks most to your heart. Heck, it's worth planning where you live, where you work and where your home base is around that too!

Expanding Practices

In the spring, walking a labyrinth is absolutely, hands-down my favorite way to walk grounded on the earth while connecting with spirit. If you took only one thing from this entire guide to grounding, and it was to create a simple labyrinth and walk it barefoot, I will feel completely fulfilled in my mission to support your physical and spiritual health. For me, there is something about opening up my heart as I enter the labyrinth, asking questions or expressing gratitude or seeking guidance, and then the simplicity of putting one foot in front of the other and walking the path.

Spring Activity 14: Labyrinth

If you are not lucky enough to live near a labyrinth (there are more of them out there than you think, so it's definitely worth a google search to find one you can visit), then no worries, because it's very doable to create your own. Here's how:

Materials: Varies—from a piece of chalk for a temporary labyrinth to paint, stones, or bricks for a more permanent one.

Method: Creating a labyrinth can be as easy as finding a square of sidewalk or part of a concrete patio or driveway or a garage where you can trace out a chalk outline to walk. To draw the labyrinth, you can draw a basic spiral with a piece of chalk; just start in the middle and spiral out around and around for as many rotations as you like. You can mindfully walk the line to the center of the spiral, then turn around and walk back out. Or you can be as elaborate as tracing out the beautiful eleven, seven, or five circuit Chartres Cathedral labyrinth designs. You can find these online and either lay your choice out in colored masking tape (if you want to be able to remove it) or paint it on (if you own the property and want to make it permanent). If you want to make your labyrinth on grass or dirt, you can spray paint a temporary labyrinth that will eventually disappear or use the sprayed

line as a guide to place rocks along the path sides or even install bricks along the lines. No matter how little or how much you want to put into creating a labyrinth, mindfully placing one bare foot in front of the other, while breathing deeply and intentionally, is the most beautiful, profoundly healing movement you can make while grounded.

Spring Activity 15: Fly Prayer Flags in the Wind

This is a fun activity that I liked to do every spring with my children as they were growing up. We would take scraps of fabric and permanent markers and draw pictures and symbols and write words and blessings all over them. I would sew, staple, clip, or string them up along a ribbon, twine, or clothesline and allow the wind to carry our intentions, desires, and wishes out to the world. Whether you're young, old, or anywhere in between, prayer flags are a wonderful way to intentionally infuse the world with your positive energy or to ask for blessings, and as the sun fades the fabric over the course of the year, know that your prayers have been received. Think of it as a tea bag you are steeping in the air —creating atmospheric tea.

Materials: Squares of scrap fabric (consider using recycled fabric from old clothing, worn-out cloth napkins, or scraps of "fat quarters" left over from sewing projects or bought at a quilt shop), permanent markers, ribbon or twine, stapler or clothespins.

Method: Armed with your supplies, head outside and settle into a nice area, grounded to the earth. A picnic table at your local park works well, slipping off your shoes so your bare feet rest on the ground. With your energy centered and inward, call to mind blessings, words, symbols, and images you would like to infuse the world with. Some ideas might include love, peace, harmony, freedom, possibility, joy,

abundance, unity. Or grab some ideas from the “Word of the Year” or “Pay-It-Forward” activities in previous chapters. Even a heart or smiley face works. Once you have created a few prayer flags, clip them onto a line with clothespins or fold the top edge of the fabric over a ribbon and staple or sew. These prayer flags are wonderful when hung between trees, along fence posts or porch railings, or across an open window. Enjoy the words and prayers being carried off into the atmosphere, knowing they have been acknowledged and added to the intentional design of our universe. Allow your prayer flags to bleach and fade in the sun and wind and rain, and create new ones each year.

Spring Activity 16: Exploring Possibilities

What is true? What is fact? Is there such a thing? From what perspective? Here is a question that is way more interesting than any answer: What is possible? What is possible for you? Open-ended thinking keeps health and healing flowing to your brain. As we age, our brain goes from being malleable, flexible, growing, with open fontanels and unfused skull plates, to encasement in fused bone, linear thinking, a huge storage place for labels and facts, repetitive neuronal pathways. If you can find a way to keep your neuronal interconnections growing, you literally keep your brain younger. Adaptable. And here is how you do it: maintaining open-ended thinking.

Ask more questions than you answer in your life. Just simply ask “I wonder…?” Think of the last day you spent asking more questions than answering questions. For many of us, that day was way back in our childhood. Keep this realm of possibility open. Keep the potential of any and every outcome within your reach.

Ask “I wonder…?” and instead of answering, sit with the question. How long could you maintain that sense of

curiosity? One minute? Ten minutes? One day? A lifetime? How long can you go without creating facts for yourself or closing your line of thinking with an answer? There is such a strong pull inside us to answer; try to extend the amount of time you can hold a question without filling it with an answer. Finding meaning, freedom, and joy by living in possibility and open-ended wonderment is the best healing mind frame. “What is possible?” Now go further! “What can I imagine?” “What do I wonder?” “What can I transform?” Reestablishing possibility and open-ended thinking reestablishes health because it brings back hope.

Materials: An object found in nature.

Method: Head outside, barefoot, and spend ten minutes walking around grounded, searching for an object in nature that catches your eye. Something you can hold in your hand is nice; it doesn’t matter if it is a rock, a stick, a leaf, or a flower; even a piece of litter is wonderful. Try holding this object in your hands for ten minutes and do nothing but wonder about it. Ask open-ended questions and don’t even try to answer them. How long can you keep this up?

Let’s say it is a rock:

- I wonder how much it weighs…
- I wonder what it is made out of…
- I wonder how far I could throw it…
- I wonder if it was around when dinosaurs were around…
- I wonder why it has a grey stripe in the middle…
- I wonder if it could skip across the lake…
- I wonder who the last person to touch this was…
- I wonder where it will be in one year’s time. Ten years’ time. A hundred years’ time…
- I wonder what this rock has seen…
- I wonder what this rock has experienced…

How long can you continue to ask questions? If you can think of only two or three, do this exercise routinely until you work your way up to asking questions comfortably for an extended period of time without searching for an answer, just keeping open to the questions themselves. Maybe you'll wind up getting a fabulous idea for something to do with the rock. Maybe it will remind you of a childhood memory. Maybe you will sketch it. Maybe you will dream about it that night. Maybe you will write a poem about it. Maybe you will notice something you've never noticed before.

To have the ability to wonder—to not be satisfied with a one-word label—is to remain open to the fullest potential of health and healing that lies ahead for you, and to remain open and receptive to the universe's plan for your life. And if you've spent ten minutes, grounded, selecting an item and ten minutes wondering about it with an open mind, you've just spent twenty minutes grounded and in a healing state. Which is definitely a win.

Labels and facts can be very uninteresting, and they can give you a false sense of understanding something when in fact we know just about nothing about anything. Just because we can label something doesn't mean we know it or understand it… in fact, the labeling of it usually ends our exploration of it. Once we find a name for it, then the possibility it holds is limited to our labeling of it. Labeling collapses possibility. We can't know all there is to know about the universe and collapse it into a fact; that would be to completely ignore the enchantment and mystery of it all. Life itself is completely beyond facts and labels. Can you go into our cells, atoms, the space between atoms, and further still, and conceptualize what that looks like and what it all means? It is beyond understanding. Go down to a single molecule, or go up to the farthest reaches of space, and all you'll find are more questions. Dreaming and story telling and wondering…that's where the growth is. And slowly but surely, as I sit asking open-ended questions without answers, this practice reminds me to rejoin the path of wonder. And every year I grow less interested in answers, and more interested in possibilities.

Celebrating Practices

Every season we have plenty to celebrate with Mother Earth. In this section, I offer some ideas on how to take the party outdoors and throw a spring grounding party! We have spring equinox in March and Earth Day in April to celebrate, so choose one or go ahead and throw two parties, woot! Let's get planning.

Spring Activity 17: Spring Grounding Party Ideas

Pedicure station: Having thick calluses of dead skin on your feet acts as a barrier between you and full living contact with the earth. Spring is the best time of all to scrub all the dead skin that has built up during cold harsh winter right off of your feet, and get your feet prepped for the warmer months ahead! Have a pedicure station at your party, and lead guests over to this area as they arrive. Tell them to kick off their shoes and soak their feet in a warm bowl of soapy water. If you like, offer a foot scrubber, a foot file or other pedicure tools, a few small towels, and some nontoxic nail polish. Encourage guests to stay barefoot for the entire party after cleaning and buffing their feet. To provide a simple, organic foot scrub for your guests, mix a few tablespoons of organic olive oil with either organic granulated sugar or used coffee grounds. Use a ratio of about one part oil to three parts sugar or coffee grounds. Easy-peasy. Have a jar of organic coconut oil for guests to massage into their freshly scrubbed feet as a moisturizer.

Birdhouse station: There are so many ways to create DIY birdhouses that your guests can have a ball decorating. You could offer a collection of old plastic soda bottles, milk cartons, and tin cans that were destined for the recycling bin, or simple precut birdhouses (all you need is one board cut into seven pieces; DIY assembly guides are available all over the internet) ready to screw together and paint. Get creative

with this arts and crafts station. For the younger guests, keep it simple: have bird houses already nailed or holes already cut out of cartons and bottles, and let them paint, glue, glitter, and sticker the birdhouses to their heart's content.

Body painting: This one is so fun. Sometimes the adults get craziest of all once they have permission to start painting all available skin surfaces! In honor of spring and bare feet, bare legs and bare arms, put out several tins of body paint (there are lots of different face paint sets on the market; Natural Earth Paint makes a great nontoxic, organic set) and let the colors fly! No design needed, just beautiful swipes of extravagant color to set people free. And for those who want to sparkle and shine, consider having a bottle or two of body glitter to sprinkle on skin, through hair, and over faces!

Slip 'n' slide: A great addition to any outdoor party, as well as a fun way for guests to wash some of their body paint off before they head home, is a slip 'n' slide area. While it's easy to buy a slip 'n' slide, you can make one yourself. All you need is access to a hose, heavy-duty plastic sheeting or thick tarp, small stakes or landscape anchor pins to anchor the tarp in place, and some dish soap if you want to make it more slippery (highly recommended). Place the tarp on a gently sloping hill if possible—even a very slight incline will make the slip 'n' slide more fun! Anchor it in place along the sides and ends of the tarp (making sure the stakes or pins are completely flush with the ground and not sticking up at all) and squirt dish soap down the center of the slide. Squirt with water and once it's soaked, turn the water to low and position the hose so water streams gently down the slide, keeping it wet. Have guests take turns sliding. It's as much fun to watch as it is to participate!

Picnic feast: Keep it simple at outdoor parties; ask everyone to bring a dish to share. Potluck parties are the best: they are low stress, there is a huge variety of foods, and you are more likely to want to host future parties if you didn't have to worry about the food. Just provide lemonade, punch, your favorite

adult beverages, and plenty of water for guests to drink, and ask everyone to bring some kind of fun picnic finger food. Add a roll of paper towels, and boom! You're done. Fruit platters, deviled eggs, hummus and chips, hot dogs, sandwiches, pasta salad, cupcakes, brownies—the possibilities are endless, and you don't even have to think of them all; just enjoy whatever the guests bring.

Party favors: flower seed packets: If you garden and have saved your seeds from last year's dried flower heads, you are all set to sprinkle a pinch of seeds into envelopes to give away as party favors. If you don't have your own seeds to share, it's very inexpensive to grab a few packets of wildflowers (or choose a few flowers that pollinators need more of, like milkweed) and encourage guests to go home and sprinkle the seeds wherever they may.

Party favors: tree seedlings: Another great idea is to send guests home with tree seedlings to plant. Over fifteen billion trees are cut down every year to make items, like furniture and paper, that we take for granted every day. That's over fifty thousand trees a minute. In addition to reducing our consumption of paper products and recycling what we can, if we would each just plant one single tree every single year to help green up our world, it would not only beautify our space but also help illustrate to each other and to our children that trees are worth planting, nurturing, saving, and protecting. Send each guest home with a seedling of a tree that is native to your area and will grow well with little care. A tree seedling is a lovely eco-friendly gift to commemorate a special time with family and friends, one that will remind them of you long after the night is over. A living memory keeper!

Weekly Routines

What better time than spring, when all is growing and changing, to set up a

weekly routine to make grounding a daily healing practice? Here's my suggested weekly routine for spring; you can draw from all of the activities from this entire season to put together your own!

Sunday: Spend the afternoon tending to and grounding in your garden.

Monday: Take an evening barefoot labyrinth walk.

Tuesday: Ground before and after picking up litter at lunchtime.

Wednesday: Lie outside for a spring awakening meditation.

Thursday: Enjoy a barefoot picnic dinner outside.

Friday: Finish the week with a relaxing bird-watching expedition.

Saturday: Take a weekend trip to a U-pick berry patch.

Round out this season out with a spring equinox or Earth Day party to share grounding with your friends, family and loved ones, and get as much grounded time outside as possible watching the world wake up this spring.

PART THREE:

Ways to Further Explore and Integrate

CHAPTER 8:

Answers to Your Biggest Questions About Grounding

We have explored a number of ways to integrate daily and weekly grounding practices with the rhythms of the seasons and the rhythms of our own lives. I hope that you have tried some of these suggestions and found a marked improvement in the way your spirit feels; a boost in your energy level; and an increase in feelings of serenity, joy, and centeredness.

Through working with grounding and introducing patients to its healing properties for over a decade now, I have learned that grounding has a particular set of frequently asked questions. Anticipating that these may come up for you, I offer answers here to help troubleshoot your grounding practice as you begin and to allay any concerns you might have about getting started.

Q: Is there anything I can do to enhance grounding?

A: Yes! There are several things you can do to make your body even more conductive and ready to ground: stay well hydrated, correct any mineral deficiencies, remove dead skin from your body, and have well-moisturized skin. Conductivity is simply movement and flow along a potential gradient. In the human body, conductivity requires two things: water and electrolytes. This creates an electrolytic solution that can pass the flow of an electric potential from cell to cell to cell, spreading instantly throughout your entire body. Being dehydrated or mineral depleted will decrease your body's conductivity. So drink a big glass of water before and after each grounding session, and make sure you are eating mineral-rich foods—these include nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, chlorella, spirulina, kelp and other sea vegetables, bone broth, darkly leafy greens, avocados, wild-caught fish, fermented

foods, free-range eggs, and grass-fed beef, cheese, and butter) and/or taking a trace mineral supplement that will supply plenty of magnesium, calcium, and potassium to your cells. Because we now live in a very soil-depleted society, it's almost impossible to be mineral sufficient through food alone, and I find that most people, when tested, are found to need mineral replacement. To encourage the removal of dead skin cells, take care to dry brush your body, and treat yourself to routine pedicures to remove calluses on your feet. Thick layers of dead skin will block grounding, similar to a thick layer of bark on a tree—you want to remove dead skin so that your freshly hydrated skin is easily accessible by the earth's energy. (Yes, you can treat yourself to a pedicure without guilt—doctor's orders!) Lastly, after exfoliating or dry brushing, moisturize that fresh soft glowing skin with an organic moisturizer; my favorite is organic coconut oil. Get into a habit of rubbing organic coconut oil (or your favorite skin lotion) over your body daily, particularly after every bath or shower, to be sure that your body is hydrated inside and out and primed for grounding.

Q: Is it okay to ground if the lawn has been treated with chemicals?

A: Although you will still be grounded outside even when pesticides have just been sprayed, I don't recommend it. Pesticides have been linked with many harmful long-term effects on our body ranging from dementia[62] to autism[63] and even cancers such as lymphoma.[64] Do not use home, garden, and yard care products that include pesticides, insecticides, and chemical fertilizers. If you are grounding in a public space that has been treated with chemicals, it's best to either ground immediately after a nice ground-soaking rain or wait at least forty-eight hours after application.

Q: How do I prevent sun damage when grounding outside?

A: There are lots of things you can do to protect yourself from too much sun exposure, so don't let fear of sun damage keep you indoors. First, choose nonpeak hours to go outdoors—avoiding the hours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.—sticking with early morning and evening sunshine, which has less powerful rays. The second line of defense is to wear a hat and sunglasses at all times outdoors. This one step alone will dramatically protect the two most overexposed parts of our body: our face and our eyes. Choose a wide-brimmed hat that will protect your ears and your neck as well, and wear

sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV exposure, the main cause of cataracts as we age. The third step is to wear UV protective clothing such as shirts, rash guards (sun-protective athletic wear), scarves, and pants that block sun, which is actually more effective than a sunscreen. The last line of defense is to layer on a mineral-based, non-nano sunscreen. There are lots of wonderful sunscreens, both lotions and powders, that contain no chemical sunscreens or dangerous preservatives. Look for sunscreens that use titanium dioxide or zinc oxide as the active ingredient, and avoid chemical sunscreens such as octinoxate, oxybenzone, and avobenzone. If you are going outside only in the morning or evening and wearing a hat and sunglasses, you can have a lifetime of healthy sun exposure. If you are going to be outside for extended periods of time and/or going out during the midday sun, layer on some mineral sunscreen and some UV-protective clothing and you'll be all set to connect to the earth without damaging your skin.

Q: How can I keep bugs from biting me while grounding outside?

A: You can keep bugs away from you naturally with cedar oil. Cedar oil can be sprayed directly on the skin; on pets; around doorways, porches, and windows; and anywhere inside or outside of your home where bugs tend to congregate. Cedar oil is safe to use directly on the skin; this helps deter bugs from landing on you at all. This is my #1 go-to recommendation to avoid mosquito bites and tick bites. It repels ticks as well as flying insects. I use this so often that my daughter tells me that this cedar oil spray is—and I quote her here—"the smell of my childhood." She says that every time I spray it and she catches the scent. I just love that! You can also discourage bugs by burning sage or incense around the yard—a few incense sticks or a sage stick burning on your outdoor patio table while you eat dinner helps immensely to deter flying insects from buzzing around your food and spoiling your meal. Or, better yet, if you have a summer fire pit or bonfire going, simply throw an entire stick of sage into the fire. The sage-scented smoke keeps mosquitoes and other annoying bugs at bay for a wide area. We love it. Usually when I throw a sage stick into our bonfire that is enough insect control; no need for additional bug sprays.

Q: What can I do to prevent a tick bite?

A: Cedar oil will also deter ticks, so use this liberally on all exposed areas of your skin to deter tick bites. Lyme disease is the chief concern, but there are other tick-transmitted diseases; get to know the risks in your region. Here are steps you can take to dramatically decrease your risk of a tick bite:

- Keep plants in your yard and outdoor living space trimmed, removing piles of leaves and other debris.
- Start keeping a few chickens that you allow to free-range during the day—chickens eat ticks and will constantly scavenge for ticks and other pests that are harmful to humans. (Of course, keeping chickens is a commitment you should take seriously; don't get them just for tick control. But if you are open to having chickens, you will be surprised at how much you grow to love your chickens every bit as much as any pet you've ever had!)
- Install fencing or other enclosures to confine pets to yard areas that are mowed and trimmed.
- Brush your pets daily, checking for ticks, and keep them out of bedrooms and off of upholstered furniture during tick season (late spring, all summer, and early fall).

You should also do a thorough body check for ticks after being outside, because if you can detect a tick before it anchors on, you've just completely prevented the transmission of any diseases they carry. I recommend that you strip off your clothing and place it directly into the wash after working outside, then hop in a shower to wash up. Simply running your clothes, garden gloves, hiking boots, and so on (and, if you've contacted them before you strip and shower, bedding and towels) in your dryer will kill any ticks you don't see. All it takes is one hour of tumbling on high heat (or ninety minutes on low heat). This will destroy ticks even in fabrics or shoes that you can't wash or get wet. Let your clothes take a tumble while you do a tick check and shower, and you will have gone a long way to preventing Lyme, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and other tick-borne diseases. If you find a tick already embedded in your skin, use tweezers to gently but firmly pull it out, and be sure to save it for testing (place it in a plastic ziplocking bag with a moist paper towel), so you'll know whether it carried any disease—this can give you peace of

mind. It is infinitely easier to get a tick tested than to wait and see if you start to have symptoms. Submit a tick for testing by giving it to your local physician or sending it to http: //www.tickreport.com—they'll return results in only three days. While you wait for the tick test results, you can boost your immune system with supplements like vitamins D and C, probiotics, echinacea, and elderberry. If you're not already supplementing, start these right after any suspected exposure to ticks and you will have given yourself a head start in treating disease before it even has time to cause symptoms. Now that you are armed with some very effective holistic tips on avoiding tick bites (plus what to do if you do get one), keep going outside and enjoy the beauty that Mother Earth brings us each spring, summer, and fall without fear.

Q: How can I introduce grounding to my children?

A: Incorporating grounding routines into childhood is truly one of the best things you can do to instill in your child a healthy lifestyle that includes frequent connections with the earth and can help guide them to a lifetime of well-being. Childhood is a dangerous time for disconnection in this modern electronic age, with smart screens, computers, and television shows vying for their attention. It's super important to instill in them the habit of touching the earth every single day. Your job as a parent is to be very clear that it's okay to get dirty; that it's fine to get dirty enough each day to warrant taking a bath or shower that night. I hope you will introduce grounding as a healing tool that you reach for every time your child feels sick, anxious, or upset. Teach them to go outside and lie on the earth as a complement to whatever other healing modality you are using; for example, when they have a bruise, while you apply ice to the injured area, sit outside on the sidewalk together. If they have a headache, while you are waiting for ibuprofen to take effect, spread a blanket and lie on the grass together, reading a story. The earth can be used as adjunctive therapy for so many different needs we have throughout our lifetime, and what better time than childhood to lead by example? When you want a child to wind down after a heavy indoor day, go outside and look at the moon for twenty minutes before bed. Have your child play barefoot with the family dog outside after getting home from school. If they are nervous for a big test at school or to meet a new friend on a playdate, go outside and do some jumping jacks together on the grass. Allow them to play barefoot under a sprinkler or with

a hose on hot summer days. Encourage them to play sidewalk games, or take their messy art projects outdoors, and whenever possible move routine indoor activities outside, like having a family dinner outside every week. Your goal is to instill a love of grounding in your child, so that they consider it part of a healthy lifestyle, as important on a daily basis as eating, hydrating and sleeping. I wrote and illustrated a lovely children's picture book to help you introduce the concept of grounding to your child, called *From the Ground Up* (see the Resources section).

Q: Is it better to have more of your body surface touching the earth?

A: This might be the most common question I am asked, and it is the true impetus behind writing this book! I really wanted to share the understanding of just how conductive our human body is—every single cell in your body is conductive. If one cell is grounded, your entire body becomes grounded. Therefore, touching the earth with one foot or one fingertip is every bit as grounding as burying yourself up to your neck in sand at the beach! Grounded is grounded, and the best way to get grounded is the way that makes it most accessible to you and will get you to actually do it. Whether it's subtly slipping your shoes off under a picnic table at the park, sitting on the sidewalk on your lunch break and touching it with your hands, trailing your fingertips against trees and flowers as you walk a trail, gardening with your hands in the soil, walking your dog barefoot after dinner, taking a nap under a tree on the weekends—all are grounding, and all are equally healing.

Q: Is a longer stretch of time in contact with the earth better?

A: This is a fantastic question. I like to tell people that while there are cumulative benefits over time to prolonged grounding, your body is instantly supported at first contact, so there is really no time too short for grounding. I never want you to miss an opportunity to be grounded just because it might be for only thirty seconds while you walk barefoot to get your mail or lean against a tree while you take a break on a hike. Within seconds your skin surface conductance changes throughout your entire body, and your muscle tension decreases. As seconds turn to minutes, your neurology has gotten a calming boost from the Schumann resonance, and you might notice pain decreases and mood lifts. Over time, as minutes turn

to hours, your metabolic processes get a boost and your circulation (which supports every single organ system in your body) runs more smoothly. Grounding day after day means nighttime sleep is more restorative, stress hormones normalize, inflammation decreases, and health benefits begin to accumulate, often resulting in noticeable health benefits on a large scale.

Q: Is it still working if I don't feel anything when I touch the earth?

A: As a natural follow-up to the previous question, people often wonder if there are still health benefits if they don't feel different after grounding. Yes, absolutely there are. Whether you can feel the shift or not doesn't matter to the cells in your body, which are reaping the benefits of being grounded. On a macroscopic level you may not feel any change occur, but on a microscopic level your blood is flowing more freely, your central nervous system has been soothed, your inflammation is being reduced as electrons wash all through your body, removing some of the wear and tear your body has weathered since your last grounding session. Think about it: many medical conditions, by the time you notice symptoms, have already taken a long time to get established. So even when improvements begin on a cellular level immediately, it's natural for it to take a while to improve to the point where you actually notice the improvement. Don't get frustrated and stop grounding if you don't feel immediate benefits. Your body will thank you for the consistent support over time. You can't feel when one cell heals or works better or thrives; you can feel it only when your entire body starts functioning better. It varies from person to person, but just because you don't feel an instant reversal of larger issues going on that doesn't mean your body is not conductive and is not reaping immediate benefits—benefits that will go on to affect your future health for years to come. Keep going with your grounding practice!

Q: Is it possible to ground indoors?

A: Yes, absolutely; as discussed earlier in the book, there are many creative ways to find sheltered areas that are grounded. Cement (a component of concrete) and concrete are both conductive, so that means the slab your home is built on, the concrete floor of your garage or basement, the concrete bottom level of an apartment building or parking deck—it's all grounded. You can also find sheltered structures such as enclosed patios, sheds, even

the picnic shelter at your local park, and those concrete floors would all be grounded. You can also run a grounding line in through any window or door to have a direct line to the earth outside through a grounding stake (see chapter 6 for how to create your own grounding stake). For those with mobility issues or other reasons they cannot get outside on the earth directly, there are indoor grounding tools that provide a direct line to the earth outside. See the Resources section for indoor grounding tools.

Q: Are trees grounded?

A: Yes. Anything rooted, living and growing out of the earth's crust is grounded. That means every blade of grass, every bush, vine, tree, flower, leaf, bud, and shrub is fully grounded and can ground you from head to toe with one touch. Touch any part of a living plant rooted in the earth and you are instantly grounded. However, a plant that is removed from the earth—container plants on a deck, houseplants in indoor pots—are not grounded. Unless you run a grounding line from a grounding stake to it, touching it will not ground you. Same with the soil, dirt, rocks, and sand of the earth—when connected to the earth's crust, these will ground you, but removed from the earth and put into a container, they will not ground you unless you ground the container through a grounding line. If a tree is not living, even if it is outside on the earth it will not ground you, because it is no longer conductive. So wooden porches, patios, flooring—these are not grounded and will not ground you, even if they are built directly on the ground. Lastly, just as thick layers of dead skin on your body will insulate you from the conductive contact and prevent grounding, so will thick layers of dried-out bark. The most conductive thing to touch on a tree is the part with the most moisture, generally the leaves or flowers. Grounding needs moisture to work, which is why dried and treated wood lumber will not ground you. So reach for the green parts of any plant for a sure way to get grounded.

Q: Is water grounded?

A: Yes! I love grounding through water, especially in the warmer months. Not only does water enhance grounding, but the water itself becomes grounded when it is on or in the earth, so you don't have to touch the ground beneath the water to be grounded. Trailing your fingertips along the surface of a lake from as you glide over it in a boat will ground you every

bit as much as if you were totally immersed in the water with your feet on the lake floor. Sitting on the side of an outdoor pool with your toes in the water will ground you even if you are sitting on a towel and not touching the concrete of the bottom of the pool. Floating on top of the ocean waves will ground you even if you are not touching the ocean floor at all. The water itself will ground you every bit as much as the solid earth below the water.

Q: Are rocks grounded?

A: Yes! Just like cement and concrete, rocks are conductive. So even with all of your best hiking gear on and the thickest, most protective hiking boots covering your feet, the moment you stop at the top of your trail and sit on a rock to grab a drink of water, if you have any skin touching that rock (for example, your leg or your hand), you are entirely grounded. Same goes for river rocks, gravel, decorative patio stones, you name it—it's all conductive and will ground you if you touch them with your skin.

Q: Are sidewalks grounded?

A: Absolutely. Every inch of any sidewalk that is poured directly on the earth is grounded and waiting for your touch. So are concrete parking lot and road curbs, concrete stairs and all other concrete paths and walkways that lie on the earth—all offer a beautiful healing grounded journey for you to step onto (with bare feet) any time. An easy way to get centered before a long drive, or to give your body a break once you get out of the car, is to simply sit for a minute on the curb where you are parked and just touch the concrete curb with your hand. Note, however, that while asphalt is made from concrete and crushed rock (both conductive), it is held together with bitumen, a petroleum by-product that helps weatherproof the road, extending its longevity—but sadly, it is not conductive, and because it coats the rock and concrete, it will block you from grounding. Stick with concrete sidewalks for grounding instead of asphalt roads.

Q: Are pets and other animals grounded when they are outside? Am I grounded if I touch my pet while outside?

A: Yes and yes. Your pets and other animals are all grounded outside when their skin touches the earth. Give your beloved pets as much time as you

can outside on lovely walks, or at dog parks, or if you are lucky enough to have a yard, give them lots of yard time, and while you are at it, join in with them! Not only can you directly ground with them during the warmer months, but when it is too cold for bare feet outside in the colder months, you can simply touch your pet and be grounded while they stand or lie on the earth for you. Look for areas with thinner fur or no fur, such as their belly, ear, and nose. Dense fur is the same as thick dead skin—it keeps animals warm because it is insulating, and that means it blocks conductive flow from your pet to you if you simply pat on top of thick dry fur. So instead, give their ears a rub, kiss their nose, give them a great long tummy rub, or massage their fur so that you are reaching into the fur to touch their skin underneath. Areas that have less fur are more accessible for grounding purposes!

Q: Can I ground if I have metal pins or joint replacements in my body?

A: Yes. It is totally safe to touch the earth outside, even with joint replacements or metal pins in your body. These items, which are typically made out of metal, will become grounded and will work in concert with your body to decrease inflammation even in these areas. Unless your physician has specifically cautioned you against touching the earth or being barefoot (which I've never heard of before, but heck, you never know), then you are good to go get grounded.

Q: Can you do too little grounding? Can you do too much grounding?

A: The short answer is no and no. Human beings have been designed to live in concert with the earth since the dawn of mankind. Even though most of us do not sleep directly on the ground as our ancestors did, we are still designed to function best in a grounded state. Although there is no time too short for grounding, it would also be totally natural for our bodies to be grounded twenty-four hours a day! The bottom line: never skip grounding just because you have only a few minutes to do it.

Q: Is it okay for me to ground if I take different medications?

A: Yes! In fact, grounding may improve your health condition so much that you should be monitored if you are on any blood pressure, thyroid replacement, or blood thinning medications. As we've discussed, grounding

allows the blood to naturally move more freely, so folks on blood thinners should discuss grounding with their physician and have their blood work monitored closely, as it is very possible that the dose should be decreased to keep the blood from becoming so thin there is a bleeding risk. In a similar way, because grounding boosts our natural metabolism and also helps to balance hormones, those on thyroid medications may find over time that their thyroid dose needs to be adjusted, and many can decrease the dose over time as their body's metabolic processes heal and improve. Same story with blood pressure medications—because grounding boosts vagal tone and naturally decreases blood pressure, folks who ground regularly should inform their doctor and have their blood pressure monitored, as they may be able to reduce the dose of these medications. As a general rule, before you start grounding it's a great idea to have a physical assessment with your physician to use as a baseline, have your physician monitor your treatment to see how your body is responding as your health improves, and make any needed adjustments in your prescription medications.

Q: What is the difference between grounding and the use of magnets or other electrical therapies such as pulsed electromagnetic field therapy (*PEMF), transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation* (*TENS), and other therapies that simulate the frequencies of the earth?*

A: Because modern medicine is finally beginning to understand the extent to which the human body is conductive, there are many new healing modalities that use magnetic and electric pulses and frequencies to try to stimulate healing. Although these therapies have merit, and many have demonstrated their own clinical benefits, these electrical and magnetic fields are not coming directly from the earth, so you are not truly grounded using these simulation therapies. No battery, crystal, manmade electrical impulse, or vibrational healing tool can connect you directly to the earth without your physically touching the earth. No manmade tool can approximate the healing reservoir that is the earth. Getting grounded is totally natural, with no batteries, wires, or artificial products necessary. (Grounding stakes and lines are simply a conduit to connect the earth's conductivity with your body's when you're indoors.) Our bodies have evolved to benefit from the direct support of Mother Earth, with no comparable substitute. While there are lots of healing modalities that help support our long-term and innate health, grounding is one healing modality that you cannot approximate in

any other way, and because it is so natural, it can work completely in concert with any other healing modality you like. You may find benefit from TENS, PEMF, acupuncture, reiki, supplements, juicing, meditation, and so on, but you are not getting the earth's direct support without simply touching the earth. So be sure to include grounding as part of your balanced healing plan.

Q: Can you wear any type of footwear and still be grounded?

A: Yes, actually. There are several materials that allow you to ground through a shoe. Leather slippers and moccasins can ground you, particularly when they get wet. Thin wool or cotton slippers, like ones traditionally worn during tai chi practice, can potentially allow grounding. And now the market is starting to offer grounding shoes with conductive inserts in the soles that allow them to ground. (See the Resources section for some recommendations.) When you wear grounding shoes, make sure that you are standing outside on ground that is conductive. If you are walking on asphalt, for example, you will not be grounded, nor will you be grounded if you are wearing grounding shoes but are indoors or off the earth in any way, such as on a balcony or patio, in a car, in a house, in a store, at the office, and so on. The only way to ground with grounding shoes is under the same conditions in which you would be grounded if you were barefoot: standing directly on the earth outside or on an outdoor conductive surface such as concrete.

Q: Is it better to ground through your feet than other body parts?

A: No, absolutely not; this is a misconception. Grounding does not have to be through your feet. Because your entire body is conductive, any body part can ground your entire body immediately. Resting your face against a tree, running your hands through a garden bed, sitting with your bare legs touching the sidewalk, holding hands with someone else who is grounded—all of these ways and more are as effective as standing outside barefoot. Whatever is the easiest way for you to get grounded—through your feet, hands, face, legs, arms, neck, back—that is the best way, because whatever makes grounding most accessible to you is what you are most likely to do! Enjoy our beautiful earth and get direct support for your entire well-being by taking the time to be sure you ground routinely. Grounding is an

essential part of any long-term wellness plan.

CHAPTER 9:

A Vision of a Fully Grounded Humanity

I am so glad you have taken time to explore with me how you can work the healing practice of grounding into your daily life. No matter what the season, it's not only possible to get grounded to the earth outside, it's an exciting and (gasp!) actually a fun way to support our health. Grounding is the most enjoyable healing modality I know of. No pain, no struggle, no cost, no side effects, no specialist appointment required. It can be as passive or active an activity as you would like it to be.

So, I want to congratulate you on prioritizing your health, creating nurturing routines for your body that include grounding, and having fun with it all! As I always tell my patients, healing means that you begin to feel better and better and better—that's the point of healing, and healing not only should be fun, it also should be a big relief!

Share Your Experience of the Healing Earth

I want to send you further on your way by expanding your personal practice of grounding into a global movement—a vision of a grounded future that will show you how grounding has the potential for a broad, society-level transformation for all of humanity. There can be a grounding revolution. The more people we have grounding, the more people will be nurturing their innate health and falling more in love with our planet—and naturally yearning to treat her better. And treating the earth better means our relationship to our planet can change from one in which we use up what the earth has to offer and trash her in the process, to a beautiful symbiotic relationship.

This step, in which we begin to share the benefits of grounding with everyone we love, often comes naturally. We are motivated to share wonderful healing, connected moments with the people we care most about. I encourage you share this information with anyone and everyone. Loan out this book freely to those you feel innately inspired to share it with. If you feel an inner pull to mention grounding to someone who has a health issue, or you see someone you care about struggling with low energy, or having difficulty getting enough restorative sleep, or suffering with chronic pain, take a deep breath and share what the earth can do for them. Share with them what it feels like for you when you are grounded. Be brave and tell them how grounding boosts their body's own ability to heal and nurtures their own innate wellness. Yes, you are going to be on the front line of a movement that is just getting started—be that front-line warrior along with me.

Imagining a Grounded Humanity

I firmly believe in the healing power of grounding and that not a single person on this entire planet should be excluded from it. I often dream about what our world might look like if all of us valued grounding as an essential part of our daily experience. So I want to share what I believe that kind of world might look like.

Imagine that on every drive you take, there are safe rest stops along the route, grounding centers that give drivers an opportunity to walk barefoot along safe, clean sidewalks where bare feet are encouraged, to discharge tension and stress built up from time spent seated and driving. Getting the blood circulating more effectively, decreasing the risk of blood clots building up in the veins, boosting energy and alertness for the drive ahead, making the roads a safer place.

Imagine every town center and every urban setting having barefoot grounding centers every few blocks, encouraging walkers to remove their shoes and feel the natural ground with the soles of their feet. Every local, state and national park could have a dedicated barefoot hiking path, with free, locking storage cubbies at the trailhead where shoes can be safely stored, and foot showers and dryers for washing and drying feet provided.

Barefoot parks could include playground sections designed for bare feet for both children and adults alike, with signs that encourage exploration on different sensory surfaces such as smooth river rocks, soft grasses, shimmering sands, even smooth mud for adventurous, playful folks.

Imagine clean rivers and streams and even manmade concrete-bottomed water play areas where people are encouraged to enjoy walking, stretching, or simply resting along benches seated where they can get their feet wet. In warmer locations, imagine water playgrounds that are freely available—not expensive waterparks accessible by only a few, but free water play areas open to all.

Imagine outdoor restaurants and even entire outdoor shopping areas, farmers markets, and town centers where bare feet are the norm everywhere! Imagine it becoming standard practice to walk barefoot with a pair of lightweight shoes or flip-flops or sandals that have carabiner clips to hook easily onto purses, book bags, briefcases, belt loops, and tote bags, so that folks can slip their shoes on when entering an indoor restaurant or grocery store or shop, but then easily slip them back off and clip them to go barefoot for the rest of their day while outside.

Imagine government funds invested more in keeping green spaces, walkways, parks, and town centers clean and free of debris, and imagine fines and penalties for littering going up dramatically as citizens no longer tolerate folks polluting an earth that they want to be in contact with.

Imagine schools with designated grounding breaks throughout the day; recesses where children are encouraged to take their shoes off while playing outdoors, and outdoor grounding areas for children to eat lunch in. Imagine how much more productive the classroom portions of the day would be for these children who are grounded, centered, calm, alert, and connected. Imagine them eating in outdoor areas with concrete floors that are easy to hose off and clean but are completely grounded to the earth, so children could rest their bare feet while they eat at tables in open-air picnic shelter or gazebo settings, taking a much-needed break from the stress of indoor, top-down learning models.

Imagine textile, fashion, and shoe industries embracing grounding as a key element integral to the design of each article of clothing or footwear.

Imagine conductive socks and grounding shoes embedded with conductive fibers that allow the earth's energy to reach the sole of the foot even while the feet are protected by a rubber sole. Imagine hiking shoes that allow hikers to be protected yet connected to the earth during their entire hikes. As I mentioned previously, there are conductive socks, shoes, and gloves already available, and I hope this selection will continue to expand (see the Resources section). Imagine conductive clothing with conductive fibers woven into organic fabrics that would allow grounding to go right through pants, so that when someone sits, however briefly, on the ground, a rock, a sidewalk, or a metal park bench, or leans against a tree or takes a break on the grass or even indoors (clipping a grounding wire to the cloth), the entire outfit becomes grounded, instantly grounding the wearer. Imagine hiking and walking sticks that are conductive and allow the walker to be grounded through their hands, grounding them as they press the walking stick against the earth. Imagine the support they would feel as they navigated their journey grounded.

Imagine wheels embedded with conductive carbon in the rubber, so that even tires would transmit grounding energy to metal car frames, transferring grounded earth energy to car seats that are covered in conductive fabric, so that drivers remain grounded even while driving. Imagine we begin to design roadways that use conductive adhesive elements (this is already fully possible, as there are already conductive rubber and glue products available; the government just has to choose using these over petroleum-based additives, in order to create conductive asphalt). Imagine wheels on wheelchairs that are conductive so that disabled folks can access the earth's energy in a more user-friendly way. Imagine mobility issues no longer limiting anyone from benefiting from the healing energy of the earth, as wheelchairs, crutches, and canes all become powerfully grounded. Imagine gyms that offer outdoor grounded yoga and tai chi sessions, outdoor grounded physical therapy and massage therapy sessions done in concert with the healing flow of the earth, which would allow stretches to deepen, circulation to improve, and muscles, joints, and ligaments not only to be less sore after each therapeutic session but also to heal faster. Imagine rehabilitation centers and hospitals incorporating daily grounding sessions as part of the healing plan to get people home healthier and faster.

Imagine grounding flooring options, with carpet fibers that have conductive elements woven into them, and homes and buildings designed to include naturally conductive elements such as concrete floors and tile or ceramic floors that would allow the earth's natural energy to pass right through them and up into the interior of homes, offices, hotels, gyms, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers.

Imagine trees grown indoors in homes, shopping malls, schools, hotel lobbies, and office park entryways that would all be grounded—either allowed to grow directly from the earth, with the structure built around it and natural skylights to light the interior, or with grounding stakes grounding the pots the trees are planted in, so that anyone passing by could get a quick grounding boost by simply touching the leaves as they walked past. Imagine hotel lobbies and wedding venues and office front desk areas using grounded vases to help the blooms to last longer and for people to enjoy touching and benefiting from grounded flowers. Imagine, just thinking financially, how much money that would save the hospitality industry alone, to have floral arrangements in hotel lobbies that lasted two to three times longer than ungrounded flowers do!

Imagine beds and sheet systems in hotels and for private use in homes that are grounded and allow people to sleep for hours grounded all night long (this is also a reality; see the Resources section). Imagine what this would do to dependency on prescription medications, sleep aids, and productivity in the work force as sick days decrease, moods are boosted, road rage lessens, hate crimes decrease, tolerance increases, and respect for each other and our planet becomes the backbone of a productive and kind community.

Social Effects of Being Grounded Together

Feel how our connection to our planet would innately create a symbiotic relationship in which care for the earth would naturally increase, recycling programs would boom, and excessive marketing, mass production, and consumerism would decrease. People would feel more centered and have less of a need to fill voids in their life with quick fixes, purchases that don't satisfy, addictions that are never fulfilled, and mood swings that would

stabilize.

When, over time, yards that had been filled with chemically sprayed fake green grass that never were played on or even touched by human skin become more eco-friendly as people used whatever yard space they have as often as they use their interior rooms. Front yards would become ancillary dining spaces; back yards would become ancillary family rooms. Neighbors would see neighbors so much more often, and everyone would be more familiar with each other, more connected, more respectful. I believe even vandalism and local crime would decrease. Eating outdoors in the yard every night after school and work or on weekends would become the norm; useless yards would become transformed into edible landscapes and safe grounding zones for pets, children, and adults alike to play on; and organic gardening practices would be strongly encouraged.

Ecology would improve as pesticides and herbicides are used less; waterways would become dramatically cleaner, and our oceans clearer. The toxic burden on wildlife, ocean life, and our ecosystem as a whole would decrease significantly, and over time the entire earth would begin to heal from the previous generations of humans who lived disconnected from the earth during the old age of consumerism as we moved on from overconsumption and exploitation into a new age of interconnection.

Health would improve for human beings all over the globe as chemical exposures and residues on foods would decrease and people would become less reliant on prescription medications to reduce inflammation and manage pain. Cumulative wear and tear on the body would lessen as folks enjoyed more activity throughout their entire lifespan with the support of being grounded. Heart disease, dementia, depression, arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions would naturally decrease, as well as age-related aches and pains, as going barefoot more often throughout a lifetime would allow for proper alignment of the feet, ankles, knees, lower back, upper back, and neck.

As chronic inflammatory conditions decline and longevity improves, healthcare would transform, and we would begin to assess how much time a patient spends conductively grounded to the earth as an intake assessment right alongside blood pressure, weight, heart rate, and respiratory rate. Grounding would become part of the first-line therapy

alongside conventional medical treatments, as we'd become less reliant on more invasive treatments and those with potentially harmful side effects. As reliance on conventional medicine waned, there would be less drug dependency, overdosing, and medical mistakes.

People would feel healthier and more connected to each other, to our planet, and to their divine place in things on a grander scale as they spend more time outside, under the beautiful sky during the day and under the starry night of the universe. Can you imagine this world? One where everything, from your morning commute to your evening meal to your clothing to the wellness plan your physician recommends, includes supporting your conductive health? This would all be possible if we simply felt better and treated the earth better. It could all arise from one daily healing practice: grounding.

Join Me Outside and Change the World

So please share this book with everyone you know—pass it along to your friends and tell them to pass it along to their friends. Because the more people who join this grounded movement, the more freedom people will experience in their lives as they take charge of their own health, and the more respect we will communally have for our entire planet. Recognizing our dependency on this planet is very empowering, because the less we take our planet for granted and the better we treat it, the more we thrive. Individually and collectively. A thriving planet can support a thriving society.

A future in which grounding is seen as an honored and essential daily practice means that not only will we reap immediate personal benefits starting the very first day we begin to ground, but we will also pass these benefits on for generations of people to come. Improving not only the health of the planet but the health of all of humanity. Come outside with me, and let's do this. Let's start today!

AFTERWORD:

by Stephen Kroschel

I met Laura Koniver, MD, for the first time on April 15, 2012. She was barefoot at the time and getting ready to do an interview for a film featuring a couple of men who walked on the moon. She proceeded to lead Charlie Duke and Dr. Edgar Mitchell—from *Apollo 16* and *Apollo 14,* respectively —out onto the beaches of Cape Canaveral and persuaded them both to take off their shoes. As I filmed her speaking to these astronauts, I was moved beyond words. And so were these American heroes. In fact, in the years that followed, sequels were made, and Dr. Mitchell continued to participate in the grounding movement triggered by this valiant, insightful physician.

These movies have now been circulating worldwide and to an ever-growing audience whose interest has been whetted by the steady stream of data and science documenting incontrovertible results from connecting to the ground itself in one way or another. Until Laura brought this medical modality to the fore, grounding was relegated mainly to a vague, ancient practice confined to the realm of anecdotal hearsay. Although grounding had mitigated and remediated the chronic pain and suffering of human beings since the dawn of time, it wasn't clearly understood how it worked. In retrospect, this inimitable remedy was just sitting on a shelf without a name, for centuries, because no one was an effective emissary. Until now.

The earth is designed with you in mind. You are designed with the earth in mind. You and the earth go hand in hand. That balance is vital. Once this is seen by you, the reader, and tried with even a fraction of the myriad ways that Laura outlines in this book with such prolific and scientific flair, you will be changed. For the rest of your life.

What Laura carries with her is a kind of formula for living that is as vital as food and water for our body and soul. She calls it the Earth

Prescription. Laura offers a new field of medicine; she calls it *conductive medicine*. And this is all colliding with a timeline of history in which we need it the most. The earth will shelter you. The earth will nourish you and bless you. Something is in store for you. And it begins now. It’s quite a ride.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As far as I am concerned, the only reason I exist at all is to be Clara's and Miles's mother. So my first and foremost gratitude is and will always be to my beloved daughter and son, who brought my world from a flat black-and-white, 2-D existence into an intensely colorized, 3-D experience that fills my heart with the kind of powerful, unconditional, deeply centering and overwhelming love that gives me a taste of God's Love. I want to thank my parents, Elizabeth and Vincent Hearing, for raising me to think critically, think for myself, and be brave enough to share what I truly believe in. My mother encouraged me to get outside and explore the world, and she always let me wear my prettiest dresses to do it. I came home with every inch of my hair and clothes covered with grass stains and mud—which is why I have scars all over my knees but stand here today, a fully grown woman who knows what it feels like to be both feminine and strong. Not one or the other. Thank you, Mom, for that, and for being the inspiration and originator of many of the outdoor activities in this book, from gardening to water play to party games. My father always taught me that life is way too short to be anything other than your authentic self, and he encouraged me to be as loud and bold as I wanted to be, without ever quieting me. He taught me to handle opposition with humor, which I credit for being able to weather the worst, most disorienting, and unexpected storms in life. He also was the very first person to read this book from beginning to end, helping me edit it and quietly giving me the courage to continue to write it. Thank you so much to both of my parents for the stability that they have given me throughout my life—a treasure I do not take lightly, as I know in a very real way that this is a luxury not every child has. Thank you to my husband, Steve, for being the first person to truly look into my eyes and love me as an equal partner. And for embracing grounding so strongly that you pulled me into your world, gave me a platform to reach others through your films, and fell in love in the process. To my brothers, Brian Hearing and David Hearing, as well as to my lifelong friends and soul sisters, Kristin Richeimer-Timoteo and Stacey Rosebrock. Each of you have filled both my

childhood and my adulthood with enduring solidarity and love as well as so many adventures and so much laughter that I can’t imagine how pale life would have been without you all. To everyone in the grounding movement who is open to collaborative support, offering healing and options and possibility and hope to a world that is so often negative and competitive and fear based—in particular, Echan Deravy, Sharon Whiteley, and Steve Kroschel. To the beautiful staff at the Well of Mercy retreat center, who welcomed me into their sacred space with open arms. At the Well of Mercy it is easy to find God’s presence in every facet of nature, which provided a safe space for my whirlwind of a brain to settle words down onto paper in the best way possible. And lastly to the publishers of this book that you are holding in your hand. Thank you to New Harbinger Publications for tirelessly allowing those who offer positive and uplifting voices to have a platform to contribute their writing to the world.

RESOURCES

Audio versions of all four healing meditations are online at http: //www.newharbinger.com/44895.

Find eco-friendly organic grounding tools and accessories to enhance your connection to the earth—even while indoors—on the author's website, http: //www.Intuition-Physician.com.

View the author's how-to videos:

- "Grounding Through Your Pet," https: //www.youtube.com /watch? v=k-y9gmVHP48
- "Grounding Through Water, Indoors and Outside," https: //www.youtube.com/watch?v=URR6mLwkOpE
- "Indoor Grounding, On the Cheap," https: //www.youtube .com/watch?v=M5CaPwG9r30
- "Eating Grounded" http: //www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwD mpLT0GwE
- "8 Grounding Ideas Beyond Just: 'Go Barefoot'" http: //www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgge3mAHois

From the Ground Up, children's book, http: //www.Intuition-Physician.com.

Natural Earth Paint eco-friendly paint kits, https: //naturalearthpaint.com.

Grounding shoes:

- Raum, https: //raumgoods.com
- Harmony 783, https: //Harmony783.com

Laura Koniver, MD, received her medical doctorate degree from Jefferson Medical College in 2000 at the age of twenty-six, and has been passionately supporting her patients' natural healing ever since. She is an artist, author, holistic physician, and internationally recognized grounding advocate. Koniver's healing artwork has been featured in many news and media outlets, and she's published her own children's book on grounding, *From the Ground Up*. She writes a regular health column in the national organic lifestyle magazine, *MaryJanesFarm*; is featured as an expert protagonist in several motion pictures, including *The Grounded*, *Heal for Free*, *The Earthing Movie*, and *Down to Earth*; and runs the popular health care blog, www.intuition-physician.com, where she reviews medical literature in a holistic and intuitive way.

Foreword writer **Echan Deravy** is a writer, cotranslator of *Earthing*, documentary filmmaker, and an edutainer specializing in new paradigm research. He is founder of the grounding movement in Japan, and is currently launching a Barefoot Park program to provide public greenspaces for safe grounding practices.

Afterword writer **Stephen Kroschel** is a naturalist and independent filmmaker whose groundbreaking animal work has been featured by Walt Disney Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Lionsgate, Universal Studios, the BBC, National Geographic, and more. He produced the grounding documentaries, *The Grounded* and *Heal For Free*, as well as contributed to more than 200 documentaries about nature and natural healing. He owns and operates the Kroschel Wildlife Park, where he cares for orphaned wildlife indigenous to Alaska and Northern Canada.

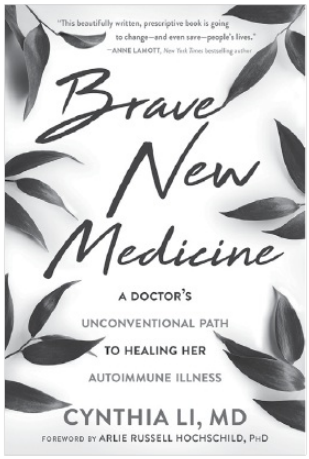
Real change *is* possible

For more than forty-five years, New Harbinger has published proven-effective self-help books and pioneering workbooks to help readers of all ages and backgrounds improve mental health and well-being, and achieve lasting personal growth. In addition, our spirituality books offer profound guidance for deepening awareness and cultivating healing, self-discovery, and fulfillment.

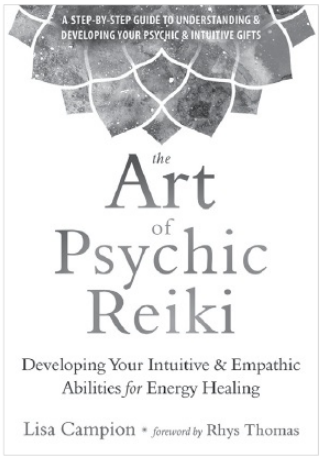
Founded by psychologist Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning, New Harbinger is proud to be an independent, employee-owned company. Our books reflect our core values of integrity, innovation, commitment, sustainability, compassion, and trust. Written by leaders in the field and recommended by therapists worldwide, New Harbinger books are practical, accessible, and provide real tools for real change.

newharbingerpublications

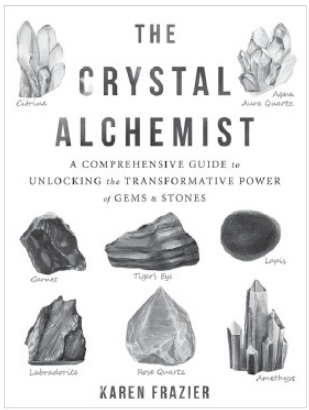
MORE BOOKS for the SPIRITUAL SEEKER


"This beautifully written, prescriptive book is going to change—and even save—people's lives."
—ANNE LAMOTT, New York Times bestselling author
Brave New Medicine
A DOCTOR'S UNCONVENTIONAL PATH TO HEALING HER AUTOIMMUNE ILLNESS
CYNTHIA LI, MD
FOREWORD BY ARLIE RUSSELL HOCHSCHILD, PHD

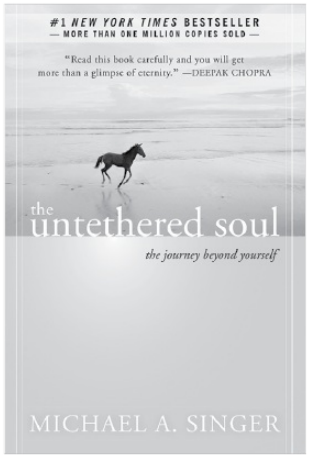
ISBN: 978-1684032051 | US $18.95


A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING & DEVELOPING YOUR PSYCHIC & INTUITIVE GIFTS
the Art of Psychic Reiki
Developing Your Intuitive & Empathic Abilities for Energy Healing
Lisa Campion * foreword by Rhys Thomas

ISBN: 978-1684031214 | US $19.95



ISBN: 978-1684032952 | US $17.95


#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
— MORE THAN ONE MILLION COPIES SOLD —
"Read this book carefully and you will get more than a glimpse of eternity." —DEEPAK CHOPRA
the untethered soul
the journey beyond yourself
MICHAEL A. SINGER

ISBN: 978-1572245372 | US $17.95

newharbingerpublications

NON-DUALITY PRESS | REVEAL PRESS

Register your **new harbinger** titles for additional benefits!

When you register your **new harbinger** title—purchased in any format, from any source—you get access to benefits like the following:

- Downloadable accessories like printable worksheets and extra content
- Instructional videos and audio files
- Information about updates, corrections, and new editions

Not every title has accessories, but we're adding new material all the time.

Access free accessories in 3 easy steps:

1. Sign in at NewHarbinger.com (or **register** to create an account).
2. Click on **register a book**. Search for your title and click the **register** button when it appears.
3. Click on the **book cover or title** to go to its details page. Click on **accessories** to view and access files.

That's all there is to it!

If you need help, visit:

NewHarbinger.com/accessories

new harbinger
CELEBRATING
40 YEARS

1 Gaétan Chevalier and Stephen T. Sinatra, "Emotional Stress, Heart Rate

Variability, Grounding, and Improved Autonomic Tone: Clinical Applications," *Integrative Medicine* 10, no. 3 (June/July 2011).

2 Gaétan Chevalier, G. Melvin, and T. Barsotti, "One-Hour Contact with the Earth's Surface (Grounding) Improves Inflammation and Blood Flow—A Randomized, Double-Blind, Pilot Study," *Health* 7 (2015): 1022–1059, doi: 10.4236/health.2015.78119.

3 Gaétan Chevalier, Stephen T. Sinatra, James L. Oschman, and Richard M. Delany, "Earthing (Grounding) the Human Body Reduces Blood Viscosity —A Major Factor in Cardiovascular Disease," *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 19, no. 2 (2013): 102–110.

4 James L. Oschman, Gaétan Chevalier, and R. Brown, "The Effects of Grounding (Earthing) on Inflammation, the Immune Response, Wound Healing, and Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Inflammatory and Autoimmune Diseases," *Journal of Inflammation Research* 8 (March 24, 2015): 83–96.

5 Richard Brown and Gaétan Chevalier, "Grounding the Human Body During Yoga Exercise with a Grounded Yoga Mat Reduces Blood Viscosity," *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine* 5 (2015): 159–168, doi: 10.4236/ojpm.2015.54019.

6 Richard Brown, Gaétan Chevalier, and Michael Hill, "Pilot Study on the Effect of Grounding on Delayed-Onset Muscle Soreness," *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 16, no. 3 (2010): 265–273; Paweł Sokal et al., "Differences in Blood Urea and Creatinine Concentrations in Earthed and Unearthed Subjects During Cycling Exercise and Recovery," *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* Article ID 382643 (2013).

7 Paweł Sokal and Karol Sokal, "The Neuromodulative Role of Earthing," *Medical Hypothesis* 77, no. 5 (November 2011): 824–826.

8 Maurice Ghaly and Dale Teplitz, "The Biologic Effects of Grounding the Human Body During Sleep as Measured by Cortisol Levels and Subjective Reporting of Sleep, Pain, and Stress," *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 10, no. 5 (2004): 767–776.

9 R. A. Passie et al., "Electrical Grounding Improves Vagal Tone in Preterm

Infants,” *Neonatology* 112 (2017): 187–192.

10 Karol Sokal and Pawel Sokal, “Earthing the Human Organism Influences Bioelectrical Processes,” *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 18, no. 3 (2012): 229–234.

11 Maurice Ghaly and Dale Teplitz, “The Biologic Effects of Grounding the Human Body During Sleep as Measured by Cortisol Levels and Subjective Reporting of Sleep, Pain, and Stress,” *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicin*e 10, no. 5 (2004): 767–776; Gaétan Chevalier et al., “Earthing: Health Implications of Reconnecting the Human Body to the Earth’s Surface Electrons,” *Journal of Environmental and Public Health* Article ID 291541 (2012), doi: 10.1155 /2012/291541.

12 Maurice Ghaly and Dale Teplitz, “The Biologic Effects of Grounding the Human Body During Sleep as Measured by Cortisol Levels and Subjective Reporting of Sleep, Pain, and Stress,” *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 10, no. 5 (2004): 767–776; Gaétan Chevalier et al., “Earthing: Health Implications of Reconnecting the Human Body to the Earth’s Surface Electrons,” *Journal of Environmental and Public Health* Article ID 291541 (2012), doi: 10.1155 /2012/291541.

13 O. Köhler et al., “Effect of Anti-inflammatory Treatment on Depression, Depressive Symptoms, and Adverse Effects: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Randomized Clinical Trials,” *JAMA Psychiatry* 71, no. 12 (2014): 1381–1391, doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.1611.

14 Sanford Nidich et al., “Non-Trauma-Focused Meditation versus Exposure Therapy in Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Randomised Controlled Trial,” *Lancet Psychiatry* 5, no. 12 (2018): 975–986, doi: 10.1016/s2215-0366(18)30384-5.

15 Jill E. Bormann et al., “Individual Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Using Mantram Repetition: A Randomized Clinical Trial,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 175, no. 10 (2018): 979–988, doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.17060611.

16 Hsiao-Yean Chiu et al., “Walking Improves Sleep in Individuals with Cancer: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized, Controlled Trials,” *Oncology Nursing Forum* 42, no. 2 (2015, doi: 10.1188/15.onf.e54-e62; Inger Thune

and Anne-Sofie Furberg, “Physical Activity and Cancer Risk: Dose-Response and Cancer, All Sites and Site-Specific,” *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 33, Supplement (2001), doi: 10.1097

/00005768-200106001-00025.

17 Richard Russell, “A Dissertation on the Use of Sea Water in the Diseases of the Glands: Particularly the Scurvy, Jaundice, King’s-Evil, Leprosy, and the Glandular Consumption,” W. Owen, 1769.

18 Cecily Maller et al., “Healthy Nature Healthy People: ‘Contact with Nature’ as an Upstream Health Promotion Intervention for Populations,” *Health Promotion International* 21, no. 1 (March 2006): 45–54, https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dai032.

19 J. Barton and J. Pretty, “What Is the Best Dose of Nature and Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health? A Multi-Study Analysis,” *Environmental Science & Technology* 44 (2010): 3947–3955, doi: 10.1021/es903183r.

20 B. J. Park et al., “Physiological Effects of Shinrin-yoku (Taking in the Atmosphere of the Forest)—Using Salivary Cortisol and Cerebral Activity as Indicators,” *Journal of Physiological Anthropology* 26 (2007): 23–128, doi: 10.2114/jpa2.26.123.

21 Q. Li et al., “Visiting a Forest, But Not a City, Increases Human Natural Killer Activity and Expression of Anti-Cancer Proteins,” *International Journal of Immunopathology and Pharmacology* 21 (2008): 117–127.

22 M. Yamaguchi, M. Deguchi, and Y. Miyazaki, “The Effects of Exercise in Forest and Urban Environments on Sympathetic Nervous Activity of Normal Young Adults,” *Journal of International Medical Research* 34 (2006): 152–159.

23 Marc G. Berman, John Jonides, and Stephen A. Kaplan, “The Cognitive Benefits of Interacting with Nature,” Psychological Science 19 (2008): 1207–1212, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02225.x.

24 Taylor A. Faber, F. E. Kuo, and W. C. Sullivan, “Coping with ADD: The Surprising Connection to Green Play Setting,” *Journal of Environment and Behaviour* 33 (2001): 54–77, doi: 10.1177/00139160121972864.

25 Frances E. Kuo and Andrea Faber Taylor, "A Potential Natural Treatment for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Evidence from a National Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 9 (September 1, 2004): 1580–1586.

26 K. Laumann, T. Gärling, and K. M. Stormark, "Selective Attention and Heart Rate Responses to Natural and Urban Environments," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 23 (2003): 125–134, doi: 10.1016/S0272-4944(02)00110-X.

27 R. A. Fuller et al., "Psychological Benefits of Greenspace Increase with Biodiversity," *Biology Letters* 3 (2007): 390–394, doi: 10.1098/rsbl.2007.0149; J. Maas et al., "Green Space, Urbanity, and Health: How Strong Is the Relation?" *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 60 (2006): 587–592, doi: 10.1136/jech.2005.043125; Diana E. Bowler, Lisette M. Buyung-Ali, Teri M. Knight, and Andrew S. Pullin, "A Systematic Review of Evidence for the Added Benefits to Health of Exposure to Natural Environments," *BMC Public Health* 10 (August 4, 2010): 456, doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-10-456; J. Pretty, "How Nature Contributes to Mental and Physical Health," *Spirituality and Health International* 5 (2004): 68–78, doi: 10.1002/shi.220.

28 P. G. Lindqvist et al. (Karolinska University Hospital, Lund University, Lund, Sweden), "Avoidance of Sun Exposure as a Risk Factor for Major Causes of Death: A Competing Risk Analysis of the Melanoma in Southern Sweden Cohort," Journal of Internal Medicine 280 (2016): 375–387, presented at SLEEP 2017: Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, Poster 1010, on June 5, 2017.

29 Anita Slomski, "Light Therapy Improves Nonseasonal Major Depression," JAMA 315, no. 4 (2016): 337, doi: 10.1001/jama.2015.18457; P. D. Sloane, M. Figueiro, and L. Cohen, "Light as Therapy for Sleep Disorders and Depression in Older Adults," *Clinical Geriatrics* 16, no. 3 (2008): 25–31; L. Bossini et al., "Light Therapy as a Treatment for Sexual Dysfunctions," *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 78, no. 2 (2009): 127–128.

30 G. Schwalfenberg, "Vitamin D and Diabetes: Improvement of Glycemic Control with Vitamin D3 Repletion," *Canadian Family Physician* 54, no. 6

(2008): 864–866.

31 MinhTu T. Hoang et al., “Association Between Low Serum 25-Hydroxyvitamin D and Depression in a Large Sample of Healthy Adults: The Cooper Center Longitudinal Study,” *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 86, no. 11 (November 2011): 1050–1055.

32 C. Duggan et al., “Effect of Vitamin D3 Supplementation in Combination with Weight Loss on Inflammatory Biomarkers in Postmenopausal Women: A Randomized Controlled Trial,” *Cancer Prevention Research* 8, no. 7 (2015): 628–635, doi: 10.1158/1940-6207.CAPR-14-0449.

33 Li Mian et al., “Review: The Impacts of Circulating 25-Hydroxyvitamin D Levels on Cancer Patient Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* 99, no. 7 (July 1, 2014): 2327–2336.

34 Elizabeth M. Robinson et al., “Randomized Trial Evaluating the Effectiveness of Coloring on Decreasing Anxiety Among Parents in a Pediatric Surgical Waiting Area,” *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 41 (2018): 80–83, doi: 10.1016/j.pedn.2018.02.001; Michail Mantzios and Kyriaki Giannou, “When Did Coloring Books Become Mindful? Exploring the Effectiveness of a Novel Method of Mindfulness-Guided Instructions for Coloring Books to Increase Mindfulness and Decrease Anxiety,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018), doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00056; Dana Carsley and Nancy L. Heath, “Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Coloring for University Students’ Test Anxiety,” *Journal of American College Health* (2019): 1–10, doi: 10.1080/07448481.2019.1583239.

35 Raymond W. Lam et al., “Efficacy of Bright Light Treatment, Fluoxetine, and the Combination in Patients with Nonseasonal Major Depressive Disorder,” *JAMA Psychiatry* 73, no. 1 (2016): 56, doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.2235; Anita Slomski, “Light Therapy Improves Nonseasonal Major Depression,” *JAMA* 315, no. 4 (2016): 337, doi: 10 .1001/jama.2015.18457.

36 Lindqvist et al., “Avoidance of Sun Exposure.”

37 P. D. Sloane, M. Figueiro, and L. Cohen, “Light as Therapy for Sleep

Disorders and Depression in Older Adults," *Clinical Geriatrics* 16, no. 3 (2008): 25–31.

38 Bossini et al., "Light Therapy."

39 Kroschel, Steve, dir. *Heal for Free*. 2014; United States: Kroschel Films.

40 Amit Gupta et al., "The Motion Path of the Digits," *Journal of Hand Surgery* 23, no. 6, 1998): 1038–1042, doi: 10.1016/s0363-5023(98) 80012-9.

41 G. J. Mitchison, "Phyllotaxis and the Fibonacci Series," *Science* 196, no. 4287 (1977): 270–275, doi: 10.1126/science.196.4287.270.

42 G. J. Mitchison, "Phyllotaxis and the Fibonacci Series," *Science* 196, no. 4287 (1977): 270–275, doi: 10.1126/science.196.4287.270.

43 Michel E. B. Yamagishi and Alex Itiro Shimabukuro, "Nucleotide Frequencies in Human Genome and Fibonacci Numbers," *Bulletin of Mathematical Biology* 70, no. 3 (2007): 643–653, doi: 10.1007/s11538-007-9261-6; Jean-Claude Perez, "Codon Populations in Single-Stranded Whole Human Genome DNA Are Fractal and Fine-Tuned by the Golden Ratio 1.618," *Interdisciplinary Sciences: Computational Life Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2010): 228–240, doi: 10.1007/s12539-010-0022-0.

44 Jack Kornfield, "A Meditation on Gratitude and Joy," *The Wise Heart* (New York: Bantam, 2008), 399–400.

45 James A. Coan et al., "Lending a Hand," *Psychological Science* 17, no. 12 (2006): 1032–1039, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01832.x.

46 Pavel Goldstein, Irit Weissman-Fogel, Guillaume Dumas, and Simone G. Shamay-Tsoory, "Brain-to-Brain Coupling During Handholding Is Associated with Pain Reduction," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2018), 201703643; Pavel Goldstein, Irit Weissman-Fogel, and Simone G. Shamay-Tsoory, "The Role of Touch in Regulating Inter-Partner Physiological Coupling During Empathy for Pain," *Scientific Reports* 7, no. 1 (2017), doi: 10.1038/s41598-017-03

627-7.

47 J. Fernandez-Mendoza et al., "Impact of the Metabolic Syndrome on

Mortality Is Modified by Objective Short Sleep Duration," *Journal of the American Heart Association* 6, no. 9 (2017), doi: 10.1161/jaha.117

.002182.

48 Ralph Mistlberger and Brianne A. Kent, "Faculty of 1000 Evaluation for B-Amyloid Accumulation in the Human Brain After One Night of Sleep Deprivation," *F1000 - Post-Publication Peer Review of the Biomedical Literature*, 20 (2018), doi: 10.3410/f.733013025.793544749; Burak Yulug et al., "Does Sleep Disturbance Affect the Amyloid Clearance Mechanisms in Alzheimer's Disease?" *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 71, no. 10 (2017): 673–677, doi: 10.1111/pcn.12539; Eiko N. Minakawa et al., "Chronic Sleep Fragmentation Exacerbates Amyloid B Deposition in Alzheimer's Disease Model Mice," *Neuroscience Letters* 653, 20 (2017): 362–369, doi: 10.1016/j.neulet.2017.05.054.

49 Hongyan Qiu et al., "Chronic Sleep Deprivation Exacerbates Learning-Memory Disability and Alzheimer's Disease-Like Pathologies in ABPPswe/PS1ΔE9 Mice," *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* 50, no. 3 (2016): 669–685, doi: 10.3233/jad-150774.

50 Kristen L. Knutson and Malcolm Von Schantz, "Associations Between Chronotype, Morbidity and Mortality in the UK Biobank Cohort," *Chronobiology International*, 20 (2018): 1–9, doi:10.1080/07420 528.2018.1454458.

51 Rebecca A. Bernert et al., "Objectively Assessed Sleep Variability as an Acute Warning Sign of Suicidal Ideation in a Longitudinal Evaluation of Young Adults at High Suicide Risk," *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 78, no. 06, 20 (2017), doi: 10.4088/jcp.16m11193.

52 Jennifer N. Felder et al., "Sleep Disorder Diagnosis During Pregnancy and Risk of Preterm Birth," *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 130, no. 3, 20 (2017): 573–581, doi: 10.1097/aog.0000000000002132.

53 H. K. Yaggi et al., "Sleep Duration as a Risk Factor for the Development of Type 2 Diabetes," *Diabetes Care* 29, no. 3, 20 (2006): 657–661, doi: 10.2337/diacare.29.03.06.dc05-0879.

54 C. Dulsat, "American Academy of Neurology—69th Annual Meeting (April 22–28, 2017—Boston, Massachusetts)," *Drugs of Today* 53, no. 5,

20 (2017): 309, doi: 10.1358/dot.2017.53.5.2646003.

55 E. Nofzinger and D. J. Buysse, “Frontal Cerebral Thermal Transfer as a Treatment for Insomnia: A Dose-Ranging Study, Abstract 0534,” *Journal of Sleep and Sleep Disorders Research*, 25th Anniversary Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (2011).

56 J. Hussain and M. Cohen, “Clinical Effects of Regular Dry Sauna Bathing: A Systematic Review,” *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (April 24, 2018): 1857413, doi: 10.1155 /2018/1857413.

57 Tanjaniina Laukkanen, Setor Kunutsor, Jussi Kauhanen, and Jari Antero Laukkanen, “Sauna Bathing Is Inversely Associated with Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease in Middle-Aged Finnish Men,” *Age and Ageing* 46, no. 2 (March 1, 2017): 245–249, https: //doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afw212.

58 Antonio González-Sarrías, María Ángeles Núñez-Sánchez, Francisco A. Tomás-Barberán, and Juan Carlos Espín. Journal, “Neuroprotective Effects of Bioavailable Polyphenol-Derived Metabolites Against Oxidative Stress-Induced Cytotoxicity in Human Neuroblastoma SH-SY5Y Cells,” *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* 65, no. 4 (2017): 752–758, doi: 10.1021/acs.jafc.6b04538; K. S. Panickar and S. Jang, “Dietary and Plant Polyphenols Exert Neuroprotective Effects and Improve Cognitive Function in Cerebral Ischemia,” *Recent Patents on Food, Nutrition & Agriculture* 5 (2013): 128–143, doi: 10.2174/1876142911305020003; C. Andres-Lacueva et al., “Anthocyanins in Aged Blueberry-Fed Rats Are Found Centrally and May Enhance Memory,” *Nutritional Neuroscience* 8 (2005): 111–120, doi: 10.1080/10284150500078117.

59 D. Del Rio et al., “Dietary (Poly)phenolics in Human Health: Structures, Bioavailability, and Evidence of Protective Effects Against Chronic Diseases,” *Antioxidants & Redox Signaling* 18 (2013): 1818–1892, doi: 10.1089/ars.2012.458; Irena Krga and Dragan Milenkovic, “Anthocyanins: From Sources and Bioavailability to Cardiovascular-Health Benefits and Molecular Mechanisms of Action,” *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* 67, no. 7 (2019): 1771–1783, doi: 10.1021 /acs.jafc.8b06737

60 Takanori Tsuda, “Dietary Anthocyanin-Rich Plants: Biochemical Basis and Recent Progress in Health Benefits Studies,” *Molecular Nutrition &*

Food Research 56, no. 1, 20 (2011): 159–170, doi: 10.1002/mnfr.201100526; Shivraj Hariram Nile and Se Won Park, "Edible Berries: Bioactive Components and Their Effect on Human Health," *Nutrition* 30, no. 2 (2014): 134–144, doi: 10.1016/j.nut.2013.04.007.

61 A. S. Kristo, D. Klimis-Zacas, and A. K. Sikalidis, "Protective Role of Dietary Berries in Cancer," *Antioxidants* 5, no. 4 (2016): 37; Navindra P. Seeram et al., "Blackberry, Black Raspberry, Blueberry, Cranberry, Red Raspberry, and Strawberry Extracts Inhibit Growth and Stimulate Apoptosis of Human Cancer Cells In Vitro," *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* 54, no. 25 (2006): 9329–9339.

62 J. R. Richardson et al., "Elevated Serum Pesticide Levels and Risk for Alzheimer Disease," *JAMA Neurology* 71, no. 3 (2014): 284– 290, doi: 10.1001/jamaneurol.2013.6030.

63 J. F. Shelton et al., "Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Prenatal Residential Proximity to Agricultural Pesticides: The CHARGE Study," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 122, no. 10 (2014): 1103–1109.

64 L. Schinasi, and M. E. Leon, "Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma and Occupational Exposure to Agricultural Pesticide Chemical Groups and Active Ingredients: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 11 (2014): 4449–4527.